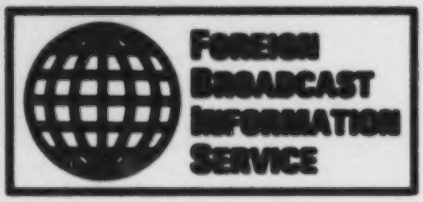

Daily Report

Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-015
Tuesday
23 January 1996

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-015 *23 January 1996*

CONTENTS

NOTICE: An * indicates material that may not be disseminated in electronic form.

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League To Send Observer to Sudanese Elections *[AFP]* 1

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Says New Government To Be Formed Soon *[Jericho VOP]* 1
'Arafat Says Waiting for King Husayn's Sign on Confederation *[Amman Radio]* 1
Turnout Percentages in Palestinian Legislative Elections Announced *[Jericho VOP]* 1
Jericho Radio Announces Victorious Palestinian Candidates *[Jericho VOP]* 2
Official Election Results To Come After Complaints Studied *[Jericho VOP]* 3
Palestinian Election Observers See Irregularities, Urge Recount *[Jerusalem Radio]* 3
'Ashrawi Views Palestinian Election Outcome *[Rome L'UNITA 22 Jan]* 3
Sha'th Says PNC Alone To Decide on Charter Amendments *[Paris Monte Carlo Radio]* 4
PNC Speaker, Hawatimah To Return to West Bank *[Jericho VOP]* 5
Exiled Leading Palestinian Figure To Return to Gaza *[AFP]* 5
'Ashrawi, al-Maliki on Options for Changing Covenant *[Jerusalem Radio]* 5
Democratic Front Chairman Threatens To Continue Fight Against 'Arafat *[Hamburg DER SPIEGEL 22 Jan]* 6
Editorial: U.S. May Have Leaked 'Ayyash Story To Get Rid of 'Arafat *[London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI 20-21 Jan]* 7

Arab-Israeli Talks

Tunisia, Israel Agree To Establish Interest Sections *[Tunis TV]* 8
Damascus Radio Says Talks To Focus on 'Mutual Security Arrangements' *[Damascus Radio]* 8

ARAB AFRICA

Algeria

Algerian Court Sentences Suspect to Death in Absentia *[Algiers Radio]* 9
11 Decapitated by Islamists in Algeria *[Paris International]* 9
Algerian Security Services Say 13 'Criminals' Killed *[Algiers Radio]* 9
84 Imams Killed by Armed Islamists in Algeria Since '92 *[Algiers Radio]* 9
343 Women Killed, 30,000 Widowed in Post-92 Algerian Violence *[MAP]* 9

Egypt

Mubarak Meets With Prime Minister, Cabinet Members, Others *[Cairo International]* 9
'Abd-al-Rahman Reportedly To Lead Islamic Group From U.S. Jail *[AFP]* 10
Egyptian Papers Praise Palestinian Elections *[MENA]* 10
Egypt: Security Forces Arrest Fugitive 'Terrorist' *[MENA]* 10

Libya

Libyan Editor Faults Closer Tunisia-Israel Ties *[Tripoli TV]* 11

Morocco

Israeli Foreign Minister Arrives in Morocco *[Rabat Radio]* 11

Israel's Baraq Meets With Moroccan King, Comments on Peace Process *[Jerusalem Radio]* .. 11
Israel's Baraq Lauds Morocco's Role in Arab-Israeli Dialogue *[MAP]* 12
Moroccan Lawyer Considers Repercussions of Ban on Publication *[Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE 13 Dec]* 12
Moroccan Press Trade Union Denounces Ban *[Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE 13 Dec]* 12
Morocco: Editor Ben Yahmed Comments on Ban *[Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE 13 Dec]* 13
Morocco: Communication Ministry's Ban Criticized *[Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE 13 Dec]* 15

ARABIAN PENINSULA

Bahrain

Bahraini Foreign Minister Discusses Domestic Situation *[WAKH]* 17
Bahraini Opposition Leader Comments on al-Jamri's Arrest *[Paris Radio Monte Carlo]* 17
Shiite Opposition Leaders Arrested for Inciting Unrest *[AFP]* 17
Bahraini Interior Ministry Lists Arrested Members of Riots *[KUNA]* 18
Bahraini Paper Says Unrest Has Reached 'Breaking Point' *[AFP]* 18
Bahraini Amir Thanks Former Qatari Amir for Support *[WAKH]* 19

Qatar

Qatar Says Bahrain Agrees to World Court Arbitration on Islands *[AFP]* 19

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Council of Ministers Denounces Riots in Bahrain *[SPA]* 19
Saudi Prince Reiterates Kingdom's Support for Bahrain *[Riyadh Radio]* 20

Yemen

Yemeni Military Deployments Reported Around Yafi' *[London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT 22 Jan]* 20

IRAQ

'Authoritative Sources' on Readiness for Resolution *[AFP]* 21
Opposition Reports Attacks Against 'Regime' Troops *[Voice of Rebellious Iraq]* 21

ISRAEL

Peres To Meet 'Arafat This Week as 'Gesture' After Election *[Jerusalem TV]* 22
Peres Comments on Palestinian Elections, Syria, Displaced *[London MBC TV]* 22
Peres Comments on Elections, PNC, Amendment of Covenant *[Jerusalem Radio]* 22
Peres Rejects 'Abbas Remarks, Denies Review on Prisoners *[Jerusalem TV]* 23
Israel: Commentary Views Impact of Abrogation of Covenant *[DAVAR RISHON 22 Jan]* 23
Sharon Urges 'Arafat To End 'Terror' Against Israel *[London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH 23 Jan]* .. 24
Peres Approves Return of PNC Speaker to Jerusalem *[Jerusalem Radio]* 25
Shahal on Autonomy Offices in, Roadblocks Around Jerusalem *[Jerusalem Radio]* 25
IDF Imposes Curfew on Hebron After Gunfire Heard in City *[Jerusalem Radio]* 25
Baraq Arrives in U.S., Comments on Upcoming Talks at Wye *[Jerusalem TV]* 26
Peres Interviewed on Peace Process *[London FINANCIAL TIMES 23 Jan]* 26
Israel's Or: Talks With Syria To Be Longer Than Anticipated *[Jerusalem Radio]* 28
Article Presents Israel's Security Proposals *[MA'ARIV 19 Jan]* 28
Israel: 'Amir Trial Opens; Defense Problems Not To Mar Proceedings *[Jerusalem Radio]* 29
Special Shin Bet Interrogation Methods Extended by 3 Months *[Jerusalem Radio]* 30
Israel: Russian Mafia Said Involved in Knesset Campaign Financing *[YEDI'OT AHARONOT 23 Jan]* 30
Israel: Baraq Seen Gaining Influence, Becoming National Leader *[HA'ARETZ 23 Jan]* 30

Article Views Iraqi Refugees in Israel *[AL-BAYADIR AL-SIYASI 28 Oct]* 31

JORDAN

Jordanian Foreign Minister Denies Iranian Diplomat Expelled *[AL-DUSTUR 23 Jan]* 34
Cuts in Jordanian Exports to Iraq Have 'No Political Bearings' *[JORDAN TIMES 23 Jan]* 34

LEBANON

Buwayz: Lebanon 'Ready' for 'Battle at All Levels' *[London AL-HAYAH 23 Jan]* 36
Lebanon: SLA Commander on Peace, Accusations of Treason *[AL-NAHAR 15 Jan]* 36
Lebanese 'Resistance' Detonates Bomb Under SLA Patrol *[Beirut Radio]* 39
Lebanon: SLA Radio Confirms Soldier Wounded by Blast *[Voice of the South]* 39
Lebanese 'Resistance' Claims 3 Israelis Killed *[Beirut Radio]* 39

SYRIA

Syrian Commentary Emphasizes Importance of U.S. Participation in Talks *[Damascus Radio]* 40
Syrian Press: Israeli Commitment to Full Withdrawal Still Awaited *[Damascus Radio]* 40

SOUTH ASIA

Afghanistan

Afghan Taleban Group Rejects Government Cease-Fire Offer *[IRNA]* 42
High State Council Calls Peace Delegation Talks 'Positive' *[Kabul Radio]* 42
Radio on Afghan Ettehad Leader's Mission to Jalalabad *[Message of Freedom]* 42
Warlord Interviewed on Afghan Situation *[London INDEPENDENT 23 Jan]* 43

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Opposition Threatens 'Militant' Action Against 15 Feb Polls *[AFP]* 44
Bangladesh Minister: Government 'Pledge-Bound' To Hold Elections *[Dhaka Radio]* 44
Bangladesh: Envoys Report Failure of Last Efforts To Solve Impasse *[THE DAILY STAR 17 Jan]* 45
Bangladesh Daily: Street Campaign To Unseat Government Planned *[THE DAILY STAR 18 Jan]* 45
Dhaka Extends Cease-Fire in Chittagong Hill Districts *[Dhaka Radio]* 46

India

Indian Congress-I Spokesman Denies 'Turmoil' in Party *[Delhi Radio]* 46
Indian Officials Resign Following Illegal Money Transfer Case *[Delhi Radio]* 46
Charges Filed Against Former Indian Ministers in Money Scandal *[Delhi Radio]* 47
West Bengal Minister Says Rao 'Kingpin' of Money Racket *[THE PIONEER 22 Jan]* 47
Indian Minister Views Visit by Brazilian President, Expectations *[EFE]* 47
Japan To Provide India Loan for Infrastructure *[Delhi Radio]* 48
Indian Advanced Light Helicopter Makes Maiden Flight *[Delhi Radio]* 48
Details on Indian Advanced Helicopter Prototype for Navy *[Delhi TV]* 48

Iran

Six Iranians on Trial for Setting Up Network To Oust Regime *[AFP]* 49
Iran Denies Involvement in Tajik Mufti's Death *[IRNA]* 49
Iran Said Not Interfering in Bahrain's Internal Affairs *[Tehran International]* 50
Iranian Ambassador on Nuclear Weapons, Ties to Russia *[ABRAR 11 Jan]* 50
Russian Envoy: Tehran, Moscow Not Rivals in CIS States *[IRNA]* 55

Velayati Opens Meeting With Turkmen, Armenian Counterparts *[IRNA]* 55
Velayati, Turkmen Foreign Minister Discuss Railroad Link *[IRNA]* 56
Rafsanjani Receives Turkmen, Armenian Foreign Ministers *[IRNA]* 56
Turkmen President Begins Visit; Rafsanjani Previews Talks *[Tehran TV]* 57
Rafsanjani, Turkmen President Discuss Expansion of Ties *[Tehran TV]* 57
Accord Reached With Turkmenistan; Niyazov Departs Tehran *[Tehran TV]* 57
Australian Senate Speaker on Talks With Iran *[Tehran Radio]* 58
Rafsanjani Receives Libyan Official, Offers Assistance *[Tehran TV]* 58
Rafsanjani Meets Sri Lankan Trade Minister *[Tehran TV]* 58
Iran Signs Economic Agreement With Sri Lanka *[Tehran TV]* 59
Iranian Official on Dialogue With Iraqi Kurdish Factions *[IRNA]* 59
Iranian Commentary Views al-Qadhdhafi-Mubarak Meeting *[Tehran International]* 59
Tehran Radio on Prospects for New Turkish Government 60
Iranian Dailies Denounce Violence in Chechnya *[IRNA]* 60
Iranian Official: Israel 'Only Source of Tension' in Middle East *[IRNA]* 61
Iranian Commentary Views Afghan Government's Optimism About Peace *[Tehran Radio]* 61
Iranian Majles Deputy: No Problems With Foreign Debt Repayment *[IRNA]* 62
Deputies' Letter Assails 'Insulting' Statement by Officials *[IRNA]* 62
Tehran Predicts 'Impartial,' 'Healthy' Elections *[Tehran Radio]* 63
RESALAT Editorial Analyzes Political Parties in Iran *[14 Jan]* 63
Jannati on Need To Fully Celebrate Revolution Anniversary *[IRNA]* 64

Pakistan

Islamabad Wants 'Categorical' Assurances From India on Nuclear Tests *[AFP]* 64
Pakistani Minister Comments on Purchase of 40 Mirages From France *[Islamabad TV]* 64
Pakistani General Says Kashmir Requires 'High State of Preparedness' *[THE NATION 22 Jan]* 64
MQM Observes 'Partial Protest Strike' in Karachi *[Islamabad Radio]* 65
Pakistani Minister Urges Nawaz Sharif To Help End Strikes *[Islamabad TV]* 65
Pakistani Opposition Leader Criticizes Karachi Situation *[AFP]* 65
Police Nab 9 'Terrorists' in Karachi; 9 Killed in Hasilpur *[Islamabad Radio]* 66
AJK Official on 'Contradictions' in Pakistan's Kashmir Policy *[THE NATION 20 Jan]* 66
Pakistan: ANP Chief Urges End to External Interference in Afghanistan *[THE FRONTIER POST 21 Jan]* 67
Afghan Brigadier Reveals Pakistan Plane Hijack Plot *[THE FRONTIER POST 23 Jan]* 67

Sri Lanka

Colombo Officials Suspect LTTE of Downing Air Force Helicopter *[AFP]* 68
LTTE 'Rebels' Claim Responsibility for Downed Sri Lankan Helicopter *[AFP]* 68
Economic Cooperation Agreements Between Sri Lanka, Iran Reported *[DAILY NEWS 23 Jan]* 68
Four Tamil Parties React to Colombo Political Proposals *[Colombo International]* 69
President Cites Success of Sri Lankan Policies *[Colombo International]* 69
LTTE's Media Propagandist Denied Visa for Canada *[DAILY NEWS 22 Jan]* 70
LTTE Groups in 'Computer Fraud Business' To Fund 'Terrorism' *[DAILY NEWS 22 Jan]* 70
Sri Lankan Troops Destroy Large 'Terrorist Camp' in Toppigala Jungle *[Colombo International]* 70
Fifteen Tigers Killed in Dawn Raid on Sri Lankan Village *[DAILY NEWS 23 Jan]* 71

Inter-Arab Affairs

Arab League To Send Observer to Sudanese Elections

NC2101125396 Paris AFP in English 1221 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 21 (AFP) — The Arab League will send a single official to oversee presidential and parliamentary elections in Sudan set for early March, League sources said on Sunday [21 January].

League head 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid told reporters he had declined a Sudanese invitation to come personally to attend the vote, but said he would send Deputy Secretary General Ahmad Bin-Hilla as an observer. League sources said the pan-Arab body would send only Bin-Hilla and not an entire team to member-state Sudan.

Khartoum asked the League in early January to send a team of observers for the vote, the first under the regime of President 'Umar al-Bashir who came to power in a 1989 coup.

The League sent 34 officials to oversee Algerian presidential elections in November, after which 'Abd-al-Majid announced the League's readiness to "respond to any Arab country's request" for observers from the organization.

Palestinian Affairs

'Arafat Says New Government To Be Formed Soon

JN2301073896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat said that a new government will be formed following the elections and will be submitted to the elected legislative council.

'Arafat said this following his meeting with Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, former Jordanian prime minister and head of the Jordanian observers team.

President 'Arafat told the press that these elections are an important springboard for the establishment of the Palestinian state that will unite with Jordan in a confederation.

'Arafat Says Waiting for King Husayn's Sign on Confederation

JN2301095796 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 2100 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] His Excellency Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat received Dr. 'Abd-al-Salam al-Majali, head of the Jordanian observers team which monitored the elections, and the delegation accompanying him, this evening.

Following the meeting, 'Arafat and al-Majali spoke to the press. 'Arafat said:

[Begin recording] ['Arafat] I would like to thank His Excellency and His Majesty, beloved King Husayn for this gesture, which is not just a brotherly gesture but a gesture from a twin brother. This gesture is represented by the presence of his excellency here at the head of this large Jordanian delegation to share with us these important elections which are an important and fundamental springboard in the Palestinian march toward the Palestinian future and toward the joint Palestinian-Jordanian march. I am pleased with this gesture, and in the name of all my brothers I thank his majesty and his excellency.

[Unidentified correspondent] What happens after the Palestinian presidential and legislative elections?

['Arafat] Of course, this legislative council will hold meetings, the first legislative council [words indistinct]. As I said, it is a very important springboard for the establishment of the Palestinian state that will unite us with our Jordanian twin brother in a confederation. Of course, this is something of which we are proud. We await a sign from our big twin brother, from his majesty the king and from his brothers in Jordan to begin, God willing, this joint march. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Turnout Percentages in Palestinian Legislative Elections Announced

JN2201210496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1915 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Statement read by Lamis al-'Alami at a news conference held at the Press Center in al-Birah—live, in English]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Bethlehem district, 65,134 people registered for voting out of which 41,465 actually voted, which constituted about 75.41 percent. In Hebron, out of 133,084 registered voters, 86,505 voted with a percentage of 55 percent. In Janin, out of 82,314, 54,937 voted with a percentage of 66.78 percent. In Jericho, out of 12,906, 10,096 voted with a percentage of 78.23 percent. In Jerusalem, out of 80,051, 32,316 only voted with a percentage of 40.37 percent. In Nabulus, out of 111,661, 86,599 voted with a 77.56 percent. In Qalqilyah, out of 27,278, 19,724 voted with 72.31 percent. In Ramallah, out of 79,108, 66,429 voted with a percentage of 71.33. In Salfit, out of 18,996, 16,062 voted with a 79.24 percent. In Tubas, out of 15,914 registered voters, 12,580 voted, which constitutes 79.05

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

percent. In Tulkarm, out of 56,319 registered voters, 44,802 voted, which constitutes 79.55 percent.

In total, out of 672,755 registered voters in the West Bank and Jerusalem, 460,541 voted, with an average percentage of 68.46 percent.

Jericho Radio Announces Victorious Palestinian Candidates

JN2301101396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1825 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Statement read by Dr. Muhammad Shutayyah, secretary of the Central Election Committee, at a news conference held at the Press Center in al-Birah on 22 January; broadcast in progress—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Shutayyah] ...Emil Jarju'i and Hanan 'Ashrawi, won the two Christian seats in the Jerusalem constituency.

Jericho Constituency: 1. Sa'ib Muhammad Salih 'Urayqat, Fatah, 6,348 votes, 62.88 percent of the votes.

Bethlehem Constituency: 1. As'ad Sulayman Hasan 'Abd-al-Qadir Salah al-Ta'mari, independent, 17,876 votes, 16.32 percent of the votes. 2. Dawud Hasan Muhammad al-Zir, independent, 9,587 votes, 8.75 percent. 3. Bisharah Saliba Sulayman Dawud, independent, 6,062 votes, 5.53 percent. 4. Mitri Jiris Abu-'Aytah, independent, 5,916 votes, 5.40 percent.

Janin Constituency: 1. Burhan Nihad al-Hajj Ibrahim Jarrar, Fatah, 18,598 votes, 8.24 percent of the votes. 2. Jamal Yunus al-Hindi, Fatah, 17,477 votes, 7.75 percent. 3. 'Azzam Najib Mustafa al-Ahmad, Fatah, 14,158 votes, 6.28 percent. 4. Ahmad Sulayman Ahmad Irashayd, Fatah, 13,484 votes, 5.98 percent. 5. Fakhri Fayiz Musa Ahmad al-Turkuman, independent, 11,510 votes, 5.1 percent. 6. Mahmud Farid As'ad Abu-al-Rubb, Fatah, 11,497 votes, 5.1 percent.

Hebron Constituency: 1. 'Abbas Zaki Sharif 'Ali Husayn Mish'al, Fatah, 39,794 votes, 8.65 percent of the voters. 2. Musa Yasin 'Isa Abu-Sabhah, Fatah, 25,575 votes, 5.56 percent. 3. Jamal 'Abd-al-Latif Salih al-Shubaki, Fatah, 24,555 votes, 5.34 percent. 4. Nabil Mahmud Yusuf 'Amr, Fatah, 23,510 votes, 5.11 percent. 5. Muhammad 'Abd-al-Fattah Muhmmad al-Hurani, Fatah, 23,150 votes, 5.03 percent. 6. Rafiq Shakir Darwish al-Natshah, Fatah, 17,206 votes, 3.74 percent. 7. Zahran Khalil Salih Abu-Qubaytah, independent, 13,956 votes, 3.47 percent. 8. 'Ali Muhammad Husayn Abu-al-Rish, independent, 12,390 votes, 2.69 percent. 9. Sulayman Mahmud Musa Abu-Sunaynah, Fatah, 12,085 votes, 2.63 percent. 10. 'Ali Ibrahim Ghazal al-Qawasimi, Fatah, 10,477 votes, 2.28 percent.

Ramallah Constituency: 1. 'Abd-al-Jawad Salih 'Ata al-Harnayil, independent, 29,302 votes, 10.56 percent. 2. Qaddurah Faris Ibrahim Faris Hamid, independent, 21,164 votes, 7.63 percent. 3. 'Abd-al-Fattah Muhammad Ibrahim Hamayil, independent, 15,513 votes, 5.59 percent. 4. Jamil Yusuf Muslih al-Tarifi, independent, 13,753 votes, 4,96 percent. 5. 'Azmi Salih Muhammad al-Shu'aybi, Fida [Palestinian Democratic Union], 13,123 votes, 4.73 percent. 6. Marwan Hasib Husayn al-Barghuthi, Fatah, 12,828 votes, 4.63 percent. 7. Ghazi Hanna Khalil Hananiya, Fatah, 10,256 votes, 3.7 percent.

Tubas Constituency: 1. Hashim Sulayman Salah Daraghimah, independent, 2,132 votes, 16.95 percent of the votes.

Salfit Constituency: 1. Ahmad Fawzi Khalid al-Dik, Fatah, 6,624 votes, 47.3 percent of the votes.

Tulkarm Constituency: 1. Al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim Mahmud 'Abd-al-Halim, Fatah, 10,369 votes, 8.23 percent of the votes. 2. Mufid Yusuf Muhammad 'Abd-Rabbuh, independent, 8,422 votes, 6.69 percent. 3. Hakam 'Umar As'ad Bal'awi, Fatah, 8,420 votes, 6.68 percent. 4. Hasan 'Abd-al-Fattah 'Abd-al-Halim Khurayshah, independent, 8,154 votes, 6.47 percent.

There was an error in the Janin list. I apologize for that. I will repeat it now.

Janin Constituency: [percentages not given] 1. Burhan Nihad al-Hajj Ibrahim Jarrar, Fatah, 18,458 votes. 2. Jamal Shati Yunus al-Hindi, Fatah, 17,435 votes. 3. 'Azzam Najib Mustafa al-Ahmad, Fatah, 14,120 votes. 4. Hikmat Hashim Lutfi Zayd, independent, 14,196 votes. 5. Ahmad Sulayman Ahmad Irshayd, Fatah, 13,474 votes. 6. Mahmud Farid As'ad Abu-al-Rubb, Fatah, 11,444 votes.

Qalqilyah Constituency: 1. Mahmud Ahmad Mahmud Da'as, Fatah, 5,934 votes, 19.16 percent of the votes. 2. 'Uthman Husayn al-Hajj 'Ali Ghashshash, independent, 5,420 votes, 17.5 percent.

Nabulus Constituency: [affiliation and percentages not given] 1. Fayiz 'Arif Ahmad Zaydan, 36,560 votes. 2. Mu'awiyah 'Ali Amin al-Masri, 27,806 votes. 3. Ghassan Walid Ahmad al-Shak'ah, 27,063. 4. Mahir Nash'at Tahir al-Masri, 22,827 votes. 5. Husam Mahmud 'Abd-alRahman Khadr, 21,290 votes. 6. Dalal 'Abd-al-Hafiz Mahmud Salamah, 20,460 votes 7. Kamil Muhmmad Salih al-Afghani, 17,445 votes. 8. Sallum 'Umran Ishaq al-Kahin, Samiritan, 2,430 votes. 9. Muhammad Mu'ad Majid Muhammad al-Nabulsi, 16,605 votes, whose seat was given to Samiritan candidate Sallum 'Umran al-Kahin.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Official Election Results To Come After Complaints Studied

JN2301084596 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0700 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Central Election Committee announced the initial final results of the presidential and legislative council elections at two news conferences held simultaneously in Gaza and Ramallah yesterday evening.

The Committee will announce all the results in a final and official manner after completing an investigation of complaints submitted by some of the candidates.

Palestinian Election Observers See Irregularities, Urge Recount

TA2301054796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] The report by international observers on the Palestinian elections claims there were serious irregularities in voting in the Ramallah and Jericho areas. The observers claim that men voted instead of women, and that people explained to voters how to vote for the Fatah candidates. Twelve independent candidates in the Hebron district also claim the results were falsified. Elections officials have ordered a recount in several areas, including the key district of Gaza city. The provisional list of winners has produced some significant changes from the initial lists that were drawn up. There were only four women on the new council. Only one woman was elected in Jerusalem, Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, not three as originally thought. Ziyad Abu-Zayyad was also elected in Jerusalem. Islamic candidate 'Imad al-Faluji also failed to be elected. Independent candidates in Gaza and Ramallah have alleged cheating. [passage omitted]

'Ashrawi Views Palestinian Election Outcome

BR2201134396 Rome L'UNITA in Italian 22 Jan 96 p 10

[Interview with Palestinian Deputy Hanan 'Ashrawi by Umberto De Giovannangeli in Jerusalem on 21 January: "'My Challenge to Yasir: Democracy and Rights'" — first paragraph is L'UNITA introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] She has triumphed in one of the most highly politicized constituencies in the West Bank, Jerusalem-Ramallah, defeating some of Yasir 'Arafat's most influential ministers and aides. She has scored an unhoped-for success, especially in terms of its size, by calling for a rule-of-law state in Palestine, founded on full respect for individual and collective freedom and equal rights between men and women "in all areas of public and private life." Some people have already dubbed her "the anti-'Arafat," the only one capable of holding her own against the new president with his landslide victory, of whom she has never spared criticism for his centralizing concept of power and his "weak" handling of the negotiations with Israel. Her friends and opponents agree on one point: She, Hanan 'Ashrawai, is the real surprise to have emerged from the first free elections held in the autonomous Palestinian territories. Apart from the numerical extent of her win, this was confirmed by the long line of notables and young supporters, most of them girls, "besieging" her office in a hotel in the heart of Arab Jerusalem, and by the long list of journalists asking to meet her. "This is where the difficult part starts, because I will have to prove worthy of the faith that so many people have placed in me and my ideas," the former spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the Washington talks said.

[De Giovannangeli] How do you feel a few hours after the announcement of your extraordinary victory in the Jerusalem constituency?

['Ashrawi] It is a very gratifying result, I have to admit; but at the same time it scares me a little because it heaps new responsibilities on my shoulders that will not be easy to fulfill. The difficult part is just beginning.

[De Giovannangeli] It was mainly women, who flooded to the polls en masse, who voted for you. How do you interpret this?

['Ashrawi] It is what has moved me most and made me happiest. I must add that the massive turnout in this constituency did not surprise me at all, because the Jerusalem constituency is fairly advanced, liberal, and open to sex difference issues. Palestinian women have used the vote to pursue their march toward freedom, claiming continuity between their active role in the Intifada years and their determination to carry weight in the creation of the Palestinian state. In this context, I think that my win constitutes an extraordinary boost for women and for the enhancement of their influence in political and institutional life, and this can only help the whole of Palestinian society to grow from every point of view.

[De Giovannangeli] Before and during the election campaign, you spared no criticism of Yasir 'Arafat, both regarding human rights in Gaza and the West Bank and for his handling of the peace talks with Israel. In light of your victory, many people are now depicting you as the "anti-'Arafat." Does this describe you?

['Ashrawi] No, because I do not accept simplifications of that kind. I do not think at all that I catalyzed a

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

general protest vote against 'Arafat in this election. I think there was a desire to award votes to someone free of old political or tribal affiliations and, above all, to express support, with the vote, for my and my colleagues' civil and human rights work, an issue on which the Palestinian electorate has shown great awareness. And this gives me high hopes for the future of our democracy. Allow me to add that there is a strong call from Palestinian society for moral integrity and modernity behind the support obtained not only by myself, but by many other independent candidates.

[De Giovannangeli] In other words, the vote for Hanan Ashrawi was also a vote against a return to the past, to an obscurantist society and a theocratic, authoritarian state?

['Ashrawi] This element was also present in the vote, but what I most want to stress, what I regard as the most significant aspect of these elections, is the high turnout. By opting to go to the polls, the vast majority of Palestinians has decided to state its will to be an active part, participating fully in the process of democratization, not least by choosing its representatives. We used Saturday's [20 January] election to lay solid foundations on which to build a democratic state.

[De Giovannangeli] What significance does this election take on in the eyes of the Palestinians in Jerusalem?

['Ashrawi] Its primary and major significance is that the battle for Jerusalem as capital of two independent states, ours and Israel's, is on. I know full well that it will be a tough, painful battle, but we Palestinians cannot give it up. The Israelis will use all the means at their disposal to get us to waive our claims; we had proof of this on election day itself. I regard the conduct of the mayor of Jerusalem, Ehud Olmert, and the Israeli authorities in general, as reprehensible. They did all they could to prevent the Palestinians from exercising their right to vote, setting up road blocks all over the city, militarizing the polling stations, and creating an atmosphere of intimidation denounced by the international observers, no less. And yet, despite this arrogant show of force by the Israelis, the Palestinians in the Jerusalem constituency went to the polls, thus giving the green light to their full political and administrative reunification with the rest of Palestine.

[De Giovannangeli] What position will you take in the Palestinian parliament? Are you thinking of uniting the anti-'Arafat opposition?

['Ashrawi] It is early days yet to talk about that; we first have to analyze the final election results in detail. What I regard as important is that the council should comprise many of people who, regardless of the political party affiliation, are on the same wavelength on various major points — such as respect for human rights and safeguarding political, cultural, and religious pluralism in the state that we are building. You see, this is a time of great transformation for Palestinian society. Old certainties have gone by the board, and everyone feels a great need to "shuffle the cards," to look beyond traditional political lines. As for me, I intend to work on furthering this quest, fostering "mobile" aggregations, in other words those brought together on individual issues, not by a spoils system or by ideological preconceptions. And if there is one "challenge" that I want to throw out to 'Arafat today, it is the challenge of democracy.

[De Giovannangeli] What do you think of the almost plebiscitary support with which Yasir 'Arafat has been elected to the presidency?

['Ashrawi] I do not think that anyone can say he is surprised by the result. We knew that 'Arafat would win a wide majority and that a minority would opt for Samiha Khalil. 'Arafat is the figurehead of my people's history, its hopes of freedom, some of them achieved, and the tragedies that have marked it. And all that was not going to be erased from its memory on election day.

Sha'th Says PNC Alone To Decide on Charter Amendments

JN2201131796 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Nabil Sha'th replied to questions by colleague Nabil Tarabayh on the stand the National Authority [NA] and the new council will adopt on the issue of amending the PLO charter, which Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres repeatedly calls for. Nabil Sha'th said:

[Begin recording] [Sha'th] We are committed to having the Palestine National Council [PNC] meet on time. The members of the Legislative Council will be members of the PNC. The PNC will convene and it is the master of its decisions. I believe we are proceeding toward achieving all the objectives and requirements of the peace agreement.

[Tarabayh] What about the situation in Jerusalem, Dr. Nabil? Elections took place everywhere in a normal manner with the exception of the Arab city of Jerusalem. Are there specific measures the PA will take to settle this outstanding problem that has to do with Jerusalem?

[Sha'th] It is an issue which calls for continued struggle to maintain the Arab demographic, political, and economic character of Jerusalem. We faced many problems from the Israelis; real threats to voters, problems

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

of entering and leaving. However, all this will not dissuade us for one moment from seeking our rights with respect to Jerusalem. We will soon start negotiations on the final status of Jerusalem.

[Tarabayh] Thank you, Dr. Sha'th. [end recording]

PNC Speaker, Hawatimah To Return to West Bank

JN2301100196 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0900 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Palestinian and Israeli officials have reached an agreement allowing Palestine National Council [PNC] Speaker Shaykh 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih to return to the occupied city of Jerusalem.

Nayif Hawatimah, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine secretary general, said he intends to return to Palestine following the Israeli decision to allow all PNC members to return.

Exiled Leading Palestinian Figure To Return to Gaza

NC2201152396 Paris AFP in English 1434 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Amman, Jan 22 (AFP) — A leading Palestinian figure Bassam Abu-Sharif said he would return to the Gaza Strip on Tuesday [23 January] for the first time in almost 30 years with the approval of Israeli authorities.

Abu-Sharif told AFP on Monday that he would travel to the Strip for the first time since 1967 to take part in meetings of the Palestine National Council [PNC], the Palestinian parliament in exile.

Israel has agreed to allow the return of all the 630 PNC members to hold a meeting to annul clauses in the Palestinian Charter calling for the destruction of the Jewish state.

Abu-Sharif, who has lived in Jordan for two years, said "the abolition of the passages in the Charter calling for the destruction of Israel is necessary as they no longer have any sense following the signature of the autonomy accords."

"If we are working to create an independent Palestinian state we must accept the principle of the existence of Israel, our neighbour," he added.

And he said he had decided to move back for good to east Jerusalem, the place of his birth.

Ahmad Quray', a top aide to Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat, said Sunday: "I believe that now the way is open for a meeting of the PNC."

"The PNC will look into the covenant and we will do it," Quray' told reporters after talks in Jerusalem with Uri Savir, the Israeli coordinator for the peace process.

"The meeting will be convened in the very near future and during the period that has been announced in the agreement," he said.

Israel insists that the PNC, which last met in 1991 and has several members who are sworn enemies of the Jewish state, scrap the articles within two months of the inauguration of the new self-rule Council elected in Saturday's historic polls.

'Ashrawi, al-Maliki on Options for Changing Covenant

TA2201172896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1500 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Palestinian sources predict that up to 100 members of the Palestine National Council [PNC] living abroad will choose to return to the autonomy areas to participate in a meeting to annul sections of the Palestinian Covenant calling for Israel's destruction. Israel, of course, has linked such a move to further progress in the peace process. However, it is still not clear if Yasir 'Arafat can muster the required two-thirds majority in the PNC. Mark Weiss reports:

[Begin recording] [Weiss] [passage omitted] Speaking in East Jerusalem this morning, Dr. Hanan 'Ashrawi, newly elected to the Palestinian Council, confirmed that only the PNC can alter the covenant but was noncommittal on what will actually happen.

['Ashrawi] The PNC is the only party empowered to discuss, amend, or deal with the charter. The Palestinian Legislative Council is not empowered to do that. When the National Council meets, then we have to let the democratic process take its course. We cannot preempt the decision of the council.

[Weiss] Do you think it will be amended? Do you want it to?

['Ashrawi] It remains to be seen. All sides have to pay their dues for peace, and the conditions for genuine peace have to be in place.

[Weiss] [passage omitted] Habash and Hawatimah have already rejected the Israeli offer to return. Dr. Riyad al-Maliki, the senior Popular Front leader in the West Bank, discussed the possibility of returning with George Habash.

[Al-Maliki] He told me: As long as I am not going to an independent Palestinian state and as long as Israeli occupation continues to exist in the West Bank and

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Gaza, and as long as I have to get permission from Israel to enter, I have to go through Israeli checkpoints and all the Israeli harassment, then I am not going to put myself in such a position. So I think that dignity here plays a very important role. As a result, I believe it is not only Habash but many other Palestinian leaders and members of the PNC will reject the offer and instead will ask for a meeting of the PNC in any of the Arab capitals.

[Weiss] Turning to the issue itself, do you believe the time has come to annul sections of the Palestinian Covenant which call for the destruction of Israel?

[Al-Maliki] I believe that the covenant was written in a period when we were talking a different language and we had different aspirations and different objectives. Now, after these new realities and what has happened not only in Palestine but in the Middle East and the rest of the world, I believe that by de facto this covenant is not effective by itself, and maybe rather than just deleting parts of the covenant, it will be much better if the Palestinians will write a new covenant.

[Weiss] The possibility of writing a totally new covenant may appeal to Yasir 'Arafat, and such a move may make it easier for him to achieve the required two-thirds majority. Presumably, if the content of the new covenant is moderate enough in tone and makes the old one null and void, such a move will also be acceptable to Israel. [end recording]

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 22 January carries a report by correspondent in the territories Golan Yokhpaz citing "Israeli defense sources" as sadd secying that "if the Palestinians show readiness to repeal the clauses in the covenant calling for Israel's destruction, then Jerusalem will not stand by with a stopwatch to pressure the council to act. But the Palestinians, for their part, are already planning to put up obstacles, and there are council members who have made it clear that if Israel does not permit them to enter East Jerusalem, they will refuse to participate in the deliberations on the covenant."]

Democratic Front Chairman Threatens To Continue Fight Against 'Arafat

AU2201163796 Hamburg DER SPIEGEL in German 22 Jan 96 p 117

[Interview with Nayif Hawatimah, chairman of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given: "Disguise of a Despot"]

[FBIS Translated Text] [DER SPIEGEL] Preparations are under way in Gaza for the solemn inauguration of Yasir 'Arafat as "president" of the Palestinian national autonomy. Have you already formulated your congratulatory cable?

[Hawatimah] 'Arafat does not deserve a congratulatory cable. I am going to cable to him that our fight against his totalitarianism will continue. Through his so-called presidency, he intends to legitimize an unconstitutional regime that our Palestinian people do not deserve.

[DER SPIEGEL] The fact that most Palestinians have voted for 'Arafat as the chairman of the Autonomy Council certainly means agreement with his peace policy.

[Hawatimah] We have very successfully called for a boycott. Several hundred thousand of the approximately 1.2 million voters did not apply for ballot papers. In our view, it was a clear signal that so many people were not interested in 'Arafat's election. Just as 'Arafat manipulated the elections, his "presidency" will become the disguise of a despot.

[DER SPIEGEL] What are you going to do against the Palestinian leader who is now democratically legitimized?

[Hawatimah] 'Arafat will feel our influence. Israel's premier, Shim'on Peres, is urging him to rewrite the Palestinian National Charter — in Israel's sense. If that is not done, Israel will halt the redeployment of its troops in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. However, for a new charter, 'Arafat will need our consent in our parliament, the Palestinian National Council (PNC). We will refuse to give our consent, and that will make him look a fool.

[DER SPIEGEL] Couldn't 'Arafat send the 88 newly elected members of the Palestinian Autonomy Council into the PNC to achieve the two-thirds majority that is required for an amendment?

[Hawatimah] That would be such an obvious manipulation of our parliament-in-exile that 'Arafat will have to consider such a step very carefully.

[DER SPIEGEL] Israel would probably also accept a charter amended by the Autonomy Council alone.

[Hawatimah] This would mean that 'Arafat had definitely smashed the PLO, which represents all the 6 million Palestinians. Our people would never forget this.

[DER SPIEGEL] While you are criticizing his autonomy policy in Damascus, 'Arafat is doing concrete reconstruction work.

[Hawatimah] It is the donor states, not 'Arafat, that carry out the reconstruction work. He is promoting active and

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

passive corruption. With 100,000 jobs in the police and the bureaucracy, 'Arafat will be the largest employer this year, and several hundred thousand people depend on him alone. Distrust is so great that many wealthy Palestinians do not invest, but boycott his totalitarian regime.

[DER SPIEGEL] Are you going to cooperate with the Islamic resistance groups Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad, which would not hesitate to carry out bomb attacks on civilians in the Israeli heartland?

[Hawatimah] We have always rejected force against the Israeli and Palestinian civilian population. But we have the right of national resistance. That is why we will continue our armed struggle against the Israeli occupation forces. However, even though we are pursuing a different way than the fundamentalist forces, we will, for tactical and political reasons, cooperate with Hamas and Jihad in the streets and in the fields — but not in military operations — to fight against the occupation and against the despot 'Arafat.

[DER SPIEGEL] If Israel and Syria make peace, will President Hafiz al-Asad ban your rejectionist front from Damascus?

[Hawatimah] I do not see such peace in the offing very soon. However, we derive out political strength from the masses of the people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Irrespective of what is happening in Damascus, we are excellently organized.

Editorial: U.S. May Have Leaked 'Ayyash Story To Get Rid of 'Arafat

MM2301102196 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 20-21 Jan 96 p 15

[Editorial: "Has 'Arafat's Role Ended"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Several U.S. and British newspapers have published reports to the effect that the security forces of the Palestinian National Authority, headed by President Yasir 'Arafat, cooperated with Israeli intelligence services in organizing the assassination of martyr Yahya 'Ayyash, architect of the suicide operations for the military wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement "Hamas."

The striking thing is that the newspapers attributed these reports to U.S. Administration officials, quoting them as saying that it was the Palestinian Authority that identified 'Ayyash's whereabouts and supplied Israeli intelligence with the necessary information, thus enabling it to eliminate him.

The question being asked is about the U.S. objective behind the decision to leak these reports three days before the Palestinian elections, which are the first of their kind.

Accusing 'Arafat's security services of cooperating with Israeli organs to assassinate one of the Palestinian people's jihad leaders is a serious accusation and tantamount to incitement to assassinate President 'Arafat. Is it in the interests of the United States for President 'Arafat to disappear from the Palestinian political stage?

We fear that the current U.S. Administration, or some of its elements, may have reached the conclusion that the Palestinian president's role ended with the end of the second stage of the Oslo agreement and the completion of the Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian cities, otherwise why has no U.S. circle denied the reports attributed to U.S. officials, not to press sources?!

We do not believe in conspiracy theory as a means of analyzing matters. However, we do not rule out that the U.S. Administration, which always espouses Israel's schemes in the Arab region, has accepted that what the Palestinians have obtained under the Oslo agreements is the end of the road and there is no reason to enter the phase of the final negotiations, which are thorny and complex and include explosive issues such as the future of occupied Jerusalem, the settlements, and the right of return.

What confirms our fears is that the ring roads that Israeli authorities are constructing around the Palestinian cities from which they have withdrawn do not indicate that they are thinking of removing any of the settlements in the West Bank in the near future.

President 'Arafat said more than once in his private meetings, both before and during the secret Oslo negotiations, that they [not further identified] want him to be like a drone, whose role ends after impregnating the queen.

President 'Arafat's disappearance from the stage would mean opening the door to the Oslo group to seize power. These are more flexible in terms of responding to Israeli ambitions as regards lowering the ceiling of Palestinian independence and turning the current Palestinian Authority into merely a municipality acting on behalf of the occupation authorities, carrying out dirty jobs like cleaning the streets, spying on Islamic opposition movements, and preventing them from playing their role in the legitimate resistance. And it is not difficult to find an extremist from among Palestinians or Israelis to carry out an assassination operation against President 'Arafat along the lines of the operation hatched for Yitzhaq Rabin, and to hold an international funeral ceremony in

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

which all Arabs, Israelis, and world leaders participate, which would be a funeral for the entire peace process as well.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Tunisia, Israel Agree To Establish Interest Sections

LD2201195996 Tunis Tunis-7 Television in Arabic 1900 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A tripartite meeting took place today in Washington between Tunisian Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq. Following this meeting, Habib Ben Yahya announced Tunisia's decision to raise the representation level with Israel to interest bureau within the framework of the agreement between the two countries on an agenda for normalization of bilateral relations.

Habib Ben Yahya said this meeting was a continuation of the contacts we have made, whether in this tripartite framework or bilaterally with the Israeli side, within the efforts Tunisia is making to contribute to the achievement of a just, comprehensive, and permanent solution for the Palestinian issue and the Middle East conflict. He had added that Tunisia already announced its readiness to develop its relations with Israel depending on the development of the peace process.

He added that today's meeting was a chance to review the positive developments in this peace process. [passage omitted]

The foreign minister said that according to these developments, which show the peace process is progressing steadily, Tunisia has decided to raise the level of representation between the two countries to an interest bureau within an agreement on the agenda of normalizing bilateral relations between the two countries.

He stated that the two bureaus will be opened simultaneously in Tunis and Tel Aviv in April 1996. He called to mind that the Tunisian contact bureau in Gaza will begin its activity soon. [passage omitted]

Damascus Radio Says Talks To Focus on 'Mutual Security Arrangements'

JN2201130996 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Syrian delegation to the peace talks that will begin on 24 January in the state of Maryland, near Washington, arrived in Washington today. The Syrian delegation is headed by Syrian Ambassador in Washington Walid al-Mu'allim.

The talks are expected to focus on mutual security arrangements, especially since military experts from both Syrian and Israeli sides joined the two delegations.

The Israeli delegation to the talks with Syria, headed by Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, left for Washington last night.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Algeria

Algerian Court Sentences Suspect to Death in Absentia

LD2301101096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 0700 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tlemcen criminal court yesterday sentenced the accused Djemal, in absentia, to death on charges of forming a criminal gang, undermining state security, carrying out willful and premeditated murder, and setting fire to public buildings.

The court sentenced the accused Hadjemal, in absentia, to 20 years imprisonment on charges of forming a criminal gang, undermining state security, and destroying cemeteries and historical sites, and the accused Bamohamed, in absentia, to 20 years in prison on charges of forming a criminal gang and aggravated theft.

11 Decapitated by Islamists in Algeria

LD2301113496 Paris Radio France International in French 1000 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Violence in Algeria: according to the Algerian press this morning, 11 people have been decapitated by Islamists in the west and in the east of the country during the last few days. Among them are five veterans of the Algerian war of independence.

Algerian Security Services Say 13 'Criminals' Killed

LD2201191396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A statement by the security services said that security forces had managed to kill 13 criminals in various search operations in the provinces in Algiers, Batna, Tiaret, and Relizane.

The same statement added that the security forces had also managed to recover a quantity of weapons and military ammunition during these operations.

84 Imams Killed by Armed Islamists in Algeria Since '92

LD2201135096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Ahmed Merani, the minister of religious affairs, has stated that 84 Imams were killed by armed Islamic groups since the beginning of violence in Algeria in 1992.

In an interview with the daily EL MUJAHID published today, Merani said that a number of mosques had been burnt while others were subjected to theft.

Answering a question about the general condition of our mosques, Merani stressed that the crisis has also touched the mosque which is considered a strategic sector that could contribute to development and could also constitute a peril.

On the priorities of future action, Merani said it is imperative to promote and develop the religious address so as to make it a means for unifying the Algerians for the sake of brotherhood and conciliation.

343 Women Killed, 30,000 Widowed in Post-92 Algerian Violence

LD2201141896 Rabat MAP in English 1342 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Algiers, Jan. 22 (MAP) — Three hundred and forty three Algerian women were killed and another 310 injured since the outbreak of violence in Algeria in 1992, Algerian "EL- KHABAR" daily said Saturday. Quoting the "call for solidarity" made by the women who took part in the National Meeting of the Democratic Women gathered lately in Algiers, the daily said that 30,000 women were widowed and 150,000 girls orphaned.

In a statement, chairwoman of the Independent Association for the Triumph of Women's Rights Khalida Messaoudi, on the occasion of the meeting, criticized the family code in force in Algeria branding it "an infamy", for it makes of the woman "a minor for life".

According to a study conducted between December 1989 and December 1991, most of the recorded 200 battered women are aged between 20 to 30. Thirty six pc [percent] of them have attended primary school and eight pc are illiterate. Other participants said that the education system in the country must be revised since only 10 students out of 100 enrolled in the first grade of secondary education pass the baccalaureate exam.

Egypt

Mubarak Meets With Prime Minister, Cabinet Members, Others

NC2301112396 Cairo Arab Republic of Egypt Radio Network in Arabic 1000 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The board of directors of the General Investment Authority held a meeting at the Presidential Office before noon today, chaired by President Husni Mubarak.

Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri and the deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture were present.

The meeting was attended by the ministers of transport, communications, electricity, information, public business sector, petroleum, tourism, housing and residential

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

communities; the minister of state for war production; the ministers of trade and supply, finance; ministers of state for cabinet affairs and planning; the minister of industry; the minister of economy and international cooperation; head of the President's Office; chairman of the executive branch of the general investment authority; governor of the central bank; former Economy Minister Mahmud Muhammad Mahmud; head of the money market agency; Counselor Husni Sayyid Hasan, head of the fatwa administration [as heard] of the Finance and Economy Ministries; chairman of the general federation of the chambers of commerce; and several businessmen.

'Abd-al-Rahman Reportedly To Lead Islamic Group From U.S. Jail

NC2201204896 Paris AFP in English 1441 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, Jan 22 (AFP)—Shaykh 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman, jailed for life by a US court, will continue in his role as spiritual head of the armed Egyptian militants al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah [Islamic Group], sources close to the group said in remarks published Monday [22 January].

"The situation of detainees in US prisons differs from Egyptian prisons. Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman will be able to contact other al-Jama'ah leaders in different countries from prison and receive prison visits," one source told the Arabic daily AL-HAYAH. "The spiritual leadership of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Rahman is difficult to replace and as long as the conditions of his imprisonment do not stop him from doing it his replacement is not expected," by the group's ruling council, the Majlis Al-Shurah.

The al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah (Islamic Group) threatened on Saturday to bring the United States "to its knees" through a wave of attacks on its interests and leaders until it freed 'Abd-al-Rahman. The blind shaykh was sentenced to life imprisonment by a New York court on Wednesday for his role in plotting terrorist attacks in the United States. Nine other co-accused received sentences of between 25 years to life.

The al-Jama'ah has led a bloody campaign to topple the government of President Husni Mubarak in which more than 940 people have died since it was launched in March 1992. It also claimed a failed assassination bid on Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June.

Egyptian Papers Praise Palestinian Elections

NC2301103396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0702 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 23 Jan (MENA)—AL-AHRAM and AL-AKHBAR describe the Palestinian elections as a historic step toward the Palestinian people assuming their legitimate political and national rights and establishing an independent state on their national soil.

In its editorial today, AL-AHRAM says that the unprecedented turnout in voting in the Palestinian elections confirms that the Palestinian people are progressing toward achieving the desired goal to establish their state.

The paper adds that the peace sought by Palestinians in the elections is the one whose progress does not end at the point of establishing a Palestinian self-rule authority. Rather, the paper continues, it is a peace that will continue to progress after setting up the self-rule toward the final goal, self-determination for the Palestinian people. The paper notes that the Palestinian people have offered great sacrifices throughout their history and that they now want to reap the fruits of this struggle and sacrifice and see their independent state.

AL-AKHBAR says that the victory achieved with a large majority by Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat in the first elections held in Palestine to the post of the head of state and the attainment of most of the votes by the Fatah Movement, which he leads, is the fruit of the great Palestinian leader's struggle. The great Palestinian leader has devoted all his effort, time, and energy to realizing the dream of every Palestinian citizen to liberate his land, it adds.

In its editorial, the paper says that the electoral process succeeded despite all Israeli attempts to delay the majority of the Palestinian people from casting their votes and the harassment and provocations by the [Israeli] military forces and Jewish citizens to cause trouble and impediments and to raise doubts about the elections' fairness.

The paper notes Egypt's praise for holding Palestinian elections in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. It also notes Egypt's call to Israel and Palestine to continue implementing provisions of the final-phase agreement with the same seriousness so that negotiations on this phase can begin in May.

Egypt: Security Forces Arrest Fugitive 'Terrorist'

NC2201220596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 2055 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Jan (MENA)—The security forces have arrested a fugitive terrorist who was sentenced to 10 years in prison for burning video stores in Higher State Security case No. 86,412.

This was stated today by a responsible security source in the Interior Ministry. It said that during its pursuit of fugitive terrorist elements, the State Security Intelligence Directorate received information that fugitive

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Ahmad Lutfi Muhammad al-Jindi, already sentenced to 10 years in prison, was seen in the Imbabah area—one of Cairo's quarters—using an alias to evade police. It added that investigations showed that the wanted culprit was working as a driver for a bakery in the al-Warraq area of Imbabah. Ambushes and points of observation were set up to monitor his movements before his arrest.

According to the source, Ahmad Lutfi was born on 1 January 1952 and was known as one of elements that resort to violence in their actions. Three identity cards and family cards bearing his photographs were seized with him. He was referred to the Higher State Security Prosecution Office for the necessary measures.

Libya

Libyan Editor Faults Closer Tunisia-Israel Ties

LD2301001296 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2300 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Tunisian news agency has reported that Tunisia's Foreign Minister Habib Ben Yahya announced today in Washington Tunisia's decision to raise the level of representation with the Israeli enemy to an interest bureau. The agency has added that this had taken place in a tripartite meeting that brought together today in Washington Tunisia's foreign minister, the enemy's foreign minister, and the U.S. secretary of state.

The Tunisian news agency has quoted Habib Ben Yahya saying that two interest bureaus will be opened simultaneously in Tunis and Tel Aviv in April this year.

The JANA Arab affairs editor commented upon this Tunisian decision to raise the representation with the Israeli enemy by saying: This decision has coincided with the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan and brought with it a provocation to the feelings of Muslims.

The editor brought back to mind in this respect the principled stance of the Arab masses, which rejects all forms of normalization policies with the Israeli enemy, which are laden with significant dangers for the future of the Arab nation.

The editor further said that this decision, which is deemed contrary to this principled stance of the Arab masses, represents at the same time a violation of the Arab conventions and resolutions, and of the principles and aims of the Arab Maghreb Union. It also gives legitimacy to the Israeli occupation of Palestine by force, which is contrary to the UN Charter and conventions.

The editor said: This decision was a surprise for us, particularly after Tunisia had frozen this issue in confirmation of the commitment with the Arab masses' principled stance, and in conformity with the Arab people's aspirations. This decision had come, with its scorn of all Arab and Islamic values, to squander the rights of the Arab countries, which the Israelis were occupying their lands in the Golan and southern Lebanon.

The JANA Arab affairs editor concluded his comment by saying: The contents of this decision also implied the squandering of the pan-Arab and religious rights in holy Jerusalem, which had been taken in Washington under American auspices on this blessed month to add new evidence to the accuracy by which the enemies of this nation chose their dates, which was an insult and wantonness that affected everything, including our nation's holy spiritual feelings.

Morocco

Israeli Foreign Minister Arrives in Morocco

LD1901141296 Rabat Moroccan Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq arrived in Morocco today. He said in a press statement that this visit comes within the framework of the peace efforts now under way in the Middle East in which Morocco, under the leadership of His Majesty King Hassan II, is playing an important role.

Concerning the issue of Jerusalem, the Israeli foreign minister affirmed that talks on Jerusalem will start next month in accordance with the peace agreement signed between the Palestinians and the Israelis. [passage omitted]

Israel's Baraq Meets With Moroccan King, Comments on Peace Process

TA2001213096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2100 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq conferred with King Hassan II in Rabat tonight. Minister Baraq told the monarch that Israel upholds its commitments and expects the Palestinians to honor their undertakings with respect to the Palestinian National Covenant and to fight terrorism with more determination.

In reference to the negotiations with Syria, Minister Baraq said that if we reach the stage of implementing the agreement, Morocco will have an important role to play in ascertaining that it is a comprehensive peace with all the states in the region.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Israel's Baraq Lauds Morocco's Role in Arab-Israeli Dialogue

LD1901144396 Rabat MAP in English 1429 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Jan. 19 (MAP) — Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has paid homage to the role played by King Hassan II of Morocco in promoting dialogue between Israel and the Arab-Muslim world.

"Morocco, under the leadership of King Hassan II, played an important moderating role in the relationship between Israel, the Arab and Muslim worlds", said Ehud Baraq in a statement upon arrival here Friday on a two day visit during which he will be received by the Moroccan monarch.

Speaking about Morocco, the Israeli foreign minister said, "This is a place where Jews lived for centuries in an atmosphere of tolerance and good relationship. We have a big, strong and influential community of Israelis of Moroccan roots and there is a high appreciation in Israel over the future role of Morocco in the development of relationship between Israel and our neighbors all around the Mediterranean and the Middle East".

Ehud Baraq hoped that his visit "would contribute to further develop these relations".

On the status of Jerusalem, the Israeli foreign minister said: "The negotiations about the permanent status are supposed to begin in few months from now. It is part of the agreements that have already been signed between us and the Palestinians". He voiced his country's commitment to respect these agreements and hoped the Palestinian side will do the same. Central to these commitments, he said, are "the relentless and determined struggle against terrorism".

However, he added, "We should not delude ourselves the debate might be very tough as the difference between positions is very wide." "We perceive a wide united Jerusalem as a capital of Israel", he emphasized adding that "of course we will accept and respect the freedom of access of any religion including of Muslim to worship" in this city.

Moroccan Lawyer Considers Repercussions of Ban on Publication

95AF0014E Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in french 13 Dec 95 p 9

[Article by Claude Vaillant, a court lawyer, Paris: "That Morocco"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Once again, after many other journals, JEUNE AFRIQUE can no longer be distributed in Morocco for the simple reason that one article, which spoke in perfectly responsible terms about the political future of this country, one that we all love and whose future cannot leave us indifferent, had the misfortune to displease the authorities in power or at least some of them!

Can we still imagine that in Morocco or on the subject of Morocco there is permission to write only what might be suitable or "please" the government in power? One dares not respond in the affirmative and yet the facts are there!

Such an attitude smacks of the most absolute arbitrariness and clearly demonstrates how little determination there is to be open — or rather the determination to be opaque — which so many other dictatorships have tried, with the consequences known to us.

Morocco has certainly brought discredit upon itself in the eyes of both its people and international opinion.

It is all the more regrettable because for several months Morocco seemed to have "relaxed the pressure," pushed perhaps by the necessity of "putting on a good face" with the European Union.

Morocco will have a hard time being accepted and will have an even harder time being understood.

Moroccan Press Trade Union Denounces Ban

96AF0014B Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 13 Dec 95 pp 6-7

[Article by Zyad Limam: "Our Magazine: The Banning of JEUNE AFRIQUE in Morocco"]

[FBIS Translated Text] On Thursday, 16 November, JEUNE AFRIQUE's issue number 1819 came out in Morocco, where it was distributed normally. On the cover was a handsome photograph of King Hassan II with the headline: "Morocco: a Time of Uncertainties." In measured terms, "respectful" according to one French daily, the article discussed the situation in the kingdom after the monarch's visit to the United States. Among other things, Francois Soudan talked about the difficulties between Rabat and Washington on the Sahara issue, the questions raised by the king's hospitalization in New York, and the cancellation of two trips that had been scheduled for weeks — the first for 6 November, to Laayoun, in the Sahara; and the second, 23 November, to Paris. On 20 November, i.e., four days after JEUNE AFRIQUE's distribution, the police started picking up those copies remaining in newsstands and informed our distributor, Sapress, that the issue had been seized. In the street, the usual game of hide-and-seek began between the police and certain news merchants. The latter

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

did not surrender the JEUNE AFRIQUE issues gracefully and denied they still had copies. The police, who have not forgotten how to be nasty, showed up as ordinary readers, asked for a copy, then demanded the rest, etc.

On 23 November, Brahim Lahmiri, Rabat's main commissioner, notified Sapress in writing that there was a ban on the sale of our weekly publication "until further notice throughout the kingdom." To judge from the official report, the commissioner was acting on the orders of the General National Security Directorate, the General Intelligence Directorate, and the king's prosecutor.

This is the second time JEUNE AFRIQUE has been banned in Morocco. Between 1972 and 1975, we were subjected to an identical measure. Since then, several issues of JEUNE AFRIQUE have been seized, quite recently, as it turns out (JEUNE AFRIQUE issue number 1803), when we covered French President Jacques Chirac's official visit to Rabat in July. Similarly, we were subjected to quotas between 23 April and 30 September 1994. None of these censorship measures has ever been justified with a legal reason, and no official explanation has been furnished to us. Thus, we do not know which law we have violated—with the possible exception of the unwritten one that bans you from "informing" readers "too well," starting with Moroccans. This attitude is all the stranger today since Morocco seems to be one of those rare African and Arab countries where you can write, speak, and think with relative — but oh how enviable — freedom. The Kingdom of Morocco rightly prides itself on having a feisty opposition press, a true parliament, and distribution of the international press, something that is not the case in Algeria, for example. In Morocco, pluralism is not a fable or a delusion. It is part of the country's political traditions and its institutions. Against this background, the banning of a journal, once again without legal justification, is archaic or at the very least comes from a bygone notion of the relationships between a state and the independent press. If some in Rabat think that JEUNE AFRIQUE is "too hard" on Morocco, compared, for example, with the "treatment given to other countries," they ought to be delighted and be proud of it rather than complaining. The freedom that journalists had demonstrates that in their country freedom of expression is no mere slogan.

When the banning measure was announced, many Moroccans, readers, journalists, and political or economic leaders were "appalled." What is more, most of them did not believe it. They spoke of a seizure, of a bad moment to be endured, and even of a "lover's quarrel" between Morocco and our weekly magazine. Yet, what is really and truly involved is a ban that will last God only knows how long.

In a communique, the National Moroccan Press Trade Union (SNPM) denounced this decision, which it found to be "contrary to the climate of openness that has characterized Morocco these past few years." It went on to condemn "this ban, which does nothing to improve the image of our country." The Moroccan press, Arabic- or French-language, published the SNPM's communique and expressed its solidarity to us (see insert); and the international press has not been at a loss.

This week we are publishing the first reactions to this grave measure. We shall continue to keep our readers informed, and we shall continue to cover what is going on in Morocco — as usual: with utter dispassion and freely.

Morocco: Editor Ben Yahmed Comments on Ban

96AF0014A Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 13 Dec 95 pp 3, 5-6

[Editorial by Bechir Ben Yahmed: "What I Believe; A Struggle That Always Begins Again"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Similar to those in preceding weeks, this issue's editorial should have been devoted to looking at a general issue. This week that issue was analyzing the outcomes of the Francophone summit meeting in Cotonou.

I cannot do so and ask your forgiveness: the harsh reawakening of censorship in a country — Morocco — that we had thought was cured of this defect forces me to deal with this particular subject, which concerns us and which concerns you.

Perhaps you heard about it in your daily newspaper, in a brief announcement: On 22 November Moroccan police seized copies of JEUNE AFRIQUE's issue number 1819 from newsstands. Next the same police force told Sapress, the national distributor, that henceforth the distribution of our weekly magazine was banned throughout the kingdom. The Moroccan communications ministry confirmed the police decision verbally (see fax).

This is not a matter of the seizure of one issue, for one week, something which is an unpleasant and arbitrary but ad hoc action. It is a matter of a ban put on Moroccans from reading JEUNE AFRIQUE for an undetermined length of time — it is a matter of the ban made on JEUNE AFRIQUE to inform its readers in Morocco, some of whom started to read it 35 years ago.

Question number one: Who? Why?

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

In a great country with stable institutions and one which, for the past three years, had seemed to have turned its back on a past that was strewn with arbitrary acts, can such a decision have been made at the level of the police directorate?

Such a directorate has the power to do so, to be sure, but does it have the right?

Ten days after the sheet of paper — a fax of which we are running on page seven — no other Moroccan authority has come forward to state, first to Moroccans, then to JEUNE AFRIQUE, who made the decision to ban and why.

This is a great shame for Morocco: This silence and this refusal to explain anything will remind Moroccans and those who know and love Morocco that these were the characteristics of an era under which they suffered and which we thought Morocco had finally left behind.

Question number two: why JEUNE AFRIQUE?

Those of you who read JEUNE AFRIQUE know that it is not hostile toward Morocco, where for decades it has had a very great number of friendly, demanding, and faithful readers. We provide them with information about their own country, about Africa, and about the rest of the world, in a different way: We complement their national newspapers, we are more persistent than our French confreres, more attentive to their worries and to their sensibility.

Some occasionally find us timid, indeed complacent; others, more rarely, find that we are too severe.

But no one has ever uncovered in our pages a generalized opposition to the government or the regime, and for good reason: We find them to be legal and legitimate.

All the world knows, particularly in Morocco, that JEUNE AFRIQUE has been the only non-Moroccan press organ — starting in 1976 — to have correctly assessed the Moroccan position on the Sahara, and to have written it steadfastly for 20 years.

This assessment earned JEUNE AFRIQUE a distribution banning order in Algeria from the spring of 1976 until 28 June 1989 (14 years).

Something which, by itself, let it be said in passing, ought to have protected JEUNE AFRIQUE from any censorship in Morocco.

So why has there been this harsh, inexplicable ban on JEUNE AFRIQUE in a country that is on the path of liberalization and where, I am certain, JEUNE AFRIQUE has many more friends than detractors, inside the government as well as in the opposition?

I think I can tell you this: With JEUNE AFRIQUE having been seized and banned more often in various countries of this Arab-African universe — the last place in the world where they engage in this stupid and hateful exercise — in 35 years, I have unfortunately become the world's expert on this subject.

In every undemocratic and centralized government, there are nested and encrusted around the boss several men who push in the direction of authoritarianism: To their boss they see and denounce threats to his power as soon as a breath of freedom blows. In their eyes any unsubmissive intellectual is a danger, each journal or reporter who has not sold out is a threat. Every article about the country is sent to the boss marked up in red. "You must punish," they repeat each day to the boss.

Such a group exists in Morocco; it is known and has been pointed out by the democratic opposition.

It concentrated its aggression on JEUNE AFRIQUE, whose free expression frustrates its members; and two years ago its efforts resulted in a semiban issued on us in the form of a "quota."

It did not take comfort, seven months later, in seeing the measure lifted, against its advice.

In Morocco, as elsewhere, the boss never resists indefinitely. He ends up punishing.

As JEUNE AFRIQUE has had the honor (and the misfortune) of being there, for the past 35 years, and because of its being pan-Arab and pan-African — seen as all the more "dangerous" since it had a real audience and a large readership in each country — it received all the blows (or almost all of them).

They whisper to the boss that the music being produced by JEUNE AFRIQUE contradicts his own and muddles it, that JEUNE AFRIQUE has a liberal influence — and therefore a harmful (sic) one — on his young people, and then one day, out of the blue, the ban hits JEUNE AFRIQUE.

Sekou Toure began the series of bans in 1963, and Houphouet ended it in 1987 (in any event we thought so until 22 November 1995).

Between the two, there was Boumedienne in 1976 and Bourguiba in 1984 and 1987 — to mention only the biggest names.

Our readers and friends in Morocco do not yet believe that from now on they are forbidden to read JEUNE AFRIQUE. They think they are going to see us next week or the week following.

They are mistaken: Experience proves that a ban is, alas, easy to issue and very difficult to retract. Boumedienne

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

thought about this, but he did so too late. Bourguiba wanted to so, but, as he was weakened, he did not. Only Houphouet had the courage to undo in 1987, when he still had the strength, what he had done in 1987.

I am told that those who inspired and established this Moroccan ban want to "kill" JEUNE AFRIQUE: They believe our magazine is grappling with serious financial difficulties, even that it is moribund. All it would take would be depriving it of the Moroccan market for it to end up in the magazine cemetery a few weeks (or less) from now. (Footnote)

These bureaucrats, who are the enemies of freedom of the press, ignore three factors:

1) We feel a ban like a sharp blow that weakens us commercially and financially. It affects us morally because we feel shame at belonging to the same universe as those who have issued it, but a ban inspires us: We feel provoked into a battle that we must win and not just for ourselves.

Having won all of our earlier struggles with censorship, we are hardened to war and we are determined to win this one — hoping this one will be the last, that finally "they" will get discouraged.

2) JEUNE AFRIQUE is not moribund. It was sick from 1900 to 1993 because its distribution area was; it is in the process of healing and in the process of regrouping its forces and a new youthfulness. This "blow" will delay our recovery, to be sure. But we will survive it.

3) JEUNE AFRIQUE is not alone. It has, thank God, many friends and will always get from its readers, advertisers, and shareholders — but also from many governments with democratic traditions or those that have recently been won over to democracy — enough support to "hang on."

With your help, dear friends, we shall win this new battle that the censors have imposed on us. They are fighting a rear guard effort — a sort of dishonorable last stand — which they can only lose; besides, that is why they dare not claim responsibility for their acts and why they are hiding.

But, as it happens, this struggle also affects, I would say primarily, Morocco and its intellectuals and political forces: It is not enough for them to show they disagree. They must fight on their side to reduce or chase away those who are tarnishing their country's image in order to recover the right to read.

Footnote

In Boumedienne's entourage in 1976 they reasoned the same way. At that time, the Algerian market accounted for 36 percent of our total market of sales and advertising. Today, the Moroccan market is approximately 9 to 10 percent of our entire market.

Morocco: Communication Ministry's Ban Criticized

96AF0014C Paris JEUNE AFRIQUE in French 13 Dec 95 pp 7-8

[Article by Hamid Barrada: "The Censor's Ways..."]

[FBIS Translated Text] "Beat your wife; if you do not know why, she knows!" The old male chauvinist adage perfectly reflects the attitude of the Moroccan censors toward JEUNE AFRIQUE. Whether they have seized an issue, imposed a quota on our weekly magazine, or issued an outright ban on it, they never feel the need to justify their decision.

So we are reduced to conjectures to explain the "punishment" that has hit us. We knew vaguely from our suppositions or thanks to passing hints that this or that article had aroused the wrath of our censors. We read and reread the suspect paper, minutely examining the headline, the lead paragraph, another paragraph, a sentence, a word, the picture, and its caption without really being set straight. This Kafka-esque study is still in vain, all the more so as it had been carried preventively upstream, before the article had been sent to the printer's. No, indeed, the censor's ways — like the Lord's — are impenetrable.

Here is one example from among many: How were we supposed to anticipate that a simple slip of the tongue regarding Chirac, given his predecessor's first name by the king during a toast in honor of his host during the French president's visit, a slip of the tongue that was picked up live by millions of viewers of Moroccan television and by one foreign press agency, could, when JEUNE AFRIQUE's reporter disclosed it in turn and without the slightest disrespectful commentary, provoke the seizure of our weekly magazine?

To tell the truth, we know better since our latest scuffles with the Moroccan kingdom. As usual, no one found it useful to provide a motive for the banning order, but those in charge of censorship at the so-called Communication Ministry have said a lot. The crime that JEUNE AFRIQUE cannot expiate when it comes to Moroccan affairs is that it is "too well informed" (sic). The list of particulars goes as follows: "Foreign journalists do not always know exactly what is going on in the kingdom and what they write, which is often inspired by spite, reduces their credibility. Moroccan journalists know a lot, but they refrain from writing it. At JEUNE AFRIQUE not only do 'they' know everything, but 'they' write it. And when 'they' do not

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

write it, 'they' work through allusions and insinuations. It is intolerable!"

The result or, rather, the verdict: A ban on the distribution of JEUNE AFRIQUE in Morocco is not due to just Francois Soudan's article published in issue number 1819, the quality of whose news, the moderation of whose tone, and, when you come right down to it, whose ordinariness is recognized by all. Just as some Nobel Prize winners, we have been recognized, if I may say so, for all of our present, past, and future work. If Rabat's anonymous master censor thought that by banning JEUNE AFRIQUE he would give comfort to the kingdom's certainties and ward off its unexpected turns of events and dangers, that is the end of that! And then, it must be said forcefully, battered wives are innocent, and husbands who go on to teach them a lesson do not exactly administer the best proof of their strength.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Bahrain

Bahraini Foreign Minister Discusses Domestic Situation

JN2201132596 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1115 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 22 Jan (WAKH)—Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Muhammad Bin-Mubarak Al Khalifah met separately with the ambassadors of the United Kingdom, the United States, the Russian Federation, the French Republic, and People's Republic of China in Manama today.

The foreign minister and the ambassadors of the five states discussed issues of mutual concern, particularly with respect to the latest regional developments. The Bahraini foreign minister assured the ambassadors of the friendly states of the Bahraini Government's resolve not to be lenient with those who disturb security and stability in the country and the government's rejection of all forms of foreign interference in its internal affairs.

Bahraini Opposition Leader Comments on al-Jamri's Arrest

JN2201182896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1600 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Report by Salah Salamah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The domestic situation in Bahrain has become more tense following the arrest of Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri, one of the most prominent opposition leaders in the country, within the framework of an arrest campaign against dozens of citizens. This was announced today by the Bahrain Freemen Movement.

Bahraini papers continued their strong criticism of the leaders of the opposition, who, according to these papers, are supported by foreign parties, particularly Iran.

We telephoned Dr. Mansur al-Jamri, who lives in London, to know more about the situation, particularly with regard to the arrest of his father, Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri:

[Begin recording] [al-Jamri] Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri was arrested around midnight Sunday at his house after a two-day siege. The family and neighbors of Shaykh al-Jamri are still under siege and house arrest.

[Salamah] What is the charge this time?

[Al-Jamri] In fact, the government failed to direct any charges which could be supported legally before an independent court, or even before Bahraini courts. It was difficult for the government to prove any accusation, except that some people took to the streets demanding the restoration of constitutional life and the parliament which was dissolved in 1975.

[Salamah] What are your expectations regarding the internal developments in Bahrain in light of this incident?

[Al-Jamri] In fact, the government was mistaken when it targeted an entire community and a group of people in Bahrain and made these accusations in this way. It is not fighting a party or an individual, it is trying to fight the identity of a large sector of people....

[Salamah, interrupting] Do you mean the Shiite opposition in Bahrain?

[Al-Jamri] In the first place, the opposition is not Shiite, it is a national opposition which includes Shiites, Sunnis, liberals, Islamists, women, and men. Dr. Munira Fakhru, who is not a Shiite, but Sunni, was relieved of her post and she is now working in the University of Colombia in New York. Also, Dr. 'Abd-al-Atif al-Mahmud is not a Shiite. Those are not Shiites, but the government insisted on striking at the Shia out of its belief that the West hates the Shia and Iran. It believed that if it concentrated on striking at the Shia it would receive the green light to strike at the opposition inside with the brutality which we have seen over the past two days. [end recording]

[Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic at 1700 GMT on 22 January reports that when asked about the scope for a possible solution, al-Jamri said:

"[Begin al-Jamri recording] The solution is in the hands of the ruling family. We believe that part of the ruling family wanted to achieve reconciliation with the people and return to constitutional life. However, differences made them resort to this violent method. We hope that a brave man will emerge from the ruling family to say that in Bahrain there is a political crisis which has no connection with any foreign side. If such a brave man does not come out, we believe that the twisted methods and policy of blaming others for these problems will complicate the situation and create a deep-rooted resistance inside the society, which will go underground and then surface, go underground for two months and then surface again. For how long will the government stand in the face of the entire people in the coming years. [end recording]"

Shiite Opposition Leaders Arrested for Inciting Unrest

NC2201190796 Paris AFP in English 1837 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Jan 22 (AFP)—Bahraini authorities said Monday [22 January] they had

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

arrested eight Shiite Moslem opposition leaders behind a wave of political unrest in the Gulf archipelago.

The eight named by the Bahraini Interior Ministry include the main opposition leader Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri.

"The security services have arrested members of a group who played a leading role in inciting acts of criminal sabotage," a ministry spokesman told the state-run news agency GNA [GULF NEWS AGENCY].

Shaykh al-Jamri and other leaders were summoned last week to the interior ministry which warned them to stop using mosques to "spread subversion."

The Bahraini army said Saturday it was ready to intervene to crush 13 months of political unrest which first erupted after the arrest of a Shiite Moslem cleric who demanded reforms and the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

At least 13 people died in a wave of violence from December 1994 to April last year. A new wave of unrest began last month when the Sunni-led government banned gatherings at Shiite mosques.

Bahraini Interior Ministry Lists Arrested Members of Riots

LD2201233496 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1843 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 22 Jan — The GULF NEWS AGENCY [WAKH] here today said that Bahraini security authorities have arrested elements ['anasir] of the group who had played a major role in instigating and stepping up disturbances and sabotage that took place in Bahrain recently.

The agency quoted an official source at the Bahraini Interior Ministry as saying that the members of the group arrested were: 'Abd-al-Amir Mansur al-Jamri, 'Abd-al-Wahab Husayn 'Ali Ahmad, Isma'il Hasan 'Ali Mushayma', 'Ali Ahmad Hawawah al-Jadahfasi, Hasan 'Ali Muhammad Jum'ah Sultan, Ibrahim Adnan Nasir Alawi Hashim, 'Ali Abdullah Ashur al-Sitrawi, and Husayn 'Ali Hasan 'Ali Al-Dibhi.

The source has pointed to the "main role played by members of this group since the outbreak of events and their being behind them, stating that they have worked for causing sedition, provoking the crimes of burning and sabotage, blessing those events that took place, giving communiques, news and untrue seditious rumors at home and abroad, transmitting and instigating communiques and propaganda on the internal situations that are detrimental to public safety and security and are harmful to the country."

The source has added that the members of the group "have exploited mosques, facilities, and religious occasions in addition to calling for illegal and illegitimate rallies and meetings. They have continuously endeavored to escalate the events through inciting sit-ins, strikes, demonstrations, disrupting studies, lauding acts of violence and terrorism until they have reached a dangerous turn represented in putting and setting off time-bombs in a number of commercial and tourist facilities, markets, and public places. Some bombs have gone off and some have been diffused by the security forces."

He has emphasized that "there is proof and evidence supported with documents and photographs that indicate the involvement of the abovementioned group in the events and that they it will be submitted to the legal authorities."

The source has said that "the public security forces are still continuing their intensive measures and that they will firmly and strictly face up any illegal acts."

Bahraini Paper Says Unrest Has Reached 'Breaking Point'

NC2301103196 Paris AFP in English 0923 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Report by V.S. Venkatraman]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Manama, Jan 23 (AFP) — Bahrain's tolerance for 14 months of political unrest has reached "breaking point," newspapers warned Tuesday [23 January] after the government stepped up its crackdown and arrested eight opposition leaders.

Shiite Moslem protestors have clashed with the Sunni-led government in a new wave of violence in the last week which has involved arson attacks, explosions, stone-throwing and attacks on security services.

"Suffering has its well defined limits but when that limit is reached, to prolong it is absolute madness," Bahrain's GULF DAILY NEWS said in an editorial. "The suffering that this country has gone through in the last 14 months cannot be borne any longer," said the newspaper. Bahraini papers reflect the official view.

"The patience and perseverance, wisdom and tolerance shown by Bahrain despite atrocities and extreme provocation through uncivilized and alien behavior has reached breaking point," the daily said.

The government had no choice but to arrests the eight opposition leaders on Monday.

"News of the arrest of any citizen is sad and anathema to any government. But when the voice of wisdom is silenced by insane acts of arson, when kindness is

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

confronted with cruelty, when tolerance is answered with terror, law and order must be implemented."

AKHBAR AL-KHALIJ, an Arabic newspaper here, predicted calm would return following the arrests of the eight people, including the main opposition leader Shaykh 'Abd-al-Amir al-Jamri.

"In taking this step against a subversive group, security services have protected the country against their irresponsible acts. This means a return to security and stability," the paper said. It said the government made the arrests after it had "exhausted all civilized means to persuade" the opposition to "end their irresponsible acts" and after having "given them several opportunities to see reason."

An Interior Ministry spokesman said the government had "proof, including documents and photographs, proving the group's involvement in the incidents which will be handed to the legal authorities."

All eight, who include two clerics, were detained after a first wave of unrest more than a year ago, sparked by the arrest of a Shiite Moslem cleric who demanded reform and the restoration of parliament suspended in 1975.

At least 13 people died in the violence from December 1994 to April last year. The new wave of unrest began last month when the Sunni-led government banned gatherings at Shiite mosques.

The Bahrain archipelago lies just off the Saudi coast in the Gulf.

Bahraini Amir Thanks Former Qatari Amir for Support

JN2201134596 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1200 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Manama, 22 Jan (WAKH) — Bahraini Amir His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al-Khalifah sent a thank you letter to his brother Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani [former Qatari amir].

The amir of Bahrain said he greatly appreciates His highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin Hamad Al Thani's congratulations and genuine feelings on the advent of the Holy month of Ramadan, and asked God almighty that his highness continue to enjoy health and happiness.

The amir of Bahrain also said he and the Bahraini Government and people appreciate Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani's condemnation and denunciation of the riots and sabotage operations that are being carried out by a group of saboteurs working under outside directives and support.

His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah said in his letter that the support and brotherly sentiments His highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad al Thani voiced shows how close and firm relations are between the two sides to achieve prosperity, security, and stability.

Qatar

Qatar Says Bahrain Agrees to World Court Arbitration on Islands

NC2301070096 Paris AFP in English 0126 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Doha, Jan 23 (AFP) — Bahrain has agreed to accept arbitration by the International Court of Justice in The Hague on its islands dispute with Qatar, the official Qatari news agency QNA said Monday [22 January].

"Bahrain has gone back on its earlier position rejecting the ICJ's arbitration, proving the validity of Qatar's position," the agency said.

Qatar requested a court ruling in 1991 on the potentially oil-rich Hawara islands in the Gulf and the demarcation of archipelago boundaries. The dispute goes back to 1939 when Britain granted Bahrain ownership of small islands including the Hawara islands. Qatar opposed Britain's decision and the dispute came close to war in 1986.

The ICJ announced last February it was competent to rule on the territorial dispute, but Bahrain refused to attend any hearings.

However, QNA said a Bahraini Foreign Ministry official attended a meeting Monday in The Hague with the court's presiding judge and Qatar's justice minister.

But a Bahraini government official contacted by AFP refused to comment on the Qatari report.

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Council of Ministers Denounces Riots in Bahrain

LD2301094996 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2340 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Riyadh, 22 Jan (SPA) — His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdullah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, crown prince, deputy prime minister and commander of the National Guard, speaking on behalf of King Fahd Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and on his own behalf offered the sincerest congratulations and best wishes to the Saudi people and all the peoples of the Islamic nation on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

His highness said when he presided over the Council of Ministers' meeting this evening at al-Yamamah Palace in Riyadh: "The Islamic nations are invited to take advantage of the occasion of this month to seek favor with God through the good deeds which are considered an important part of social solidarity in Islamic law."

Concerning the current Arab situation, Information Minister Dr. Fu'ad Bin-'Abd-al-Salam al-Farisi said in a statement which he gave to SPA at the end of the meeting that His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdullah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz warned of the broadening of the circle of differences in the Arab world and said "The continuation of this situation only benefits those lurking to whittle away the achievements of the Arab nation in political stability and social security."

Regarding the situation in the State of Bahrain, the Council of Ministers condemned and denounced the recent riots and subversion in some areas of Bahrain.

His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdullah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz affirmed that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia condemned acts of violence and terrorism anywhere and by anyone, whoever that may be.

His highness also congratulated His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat on his victory in the Palestinian authority presidential elections on behalf of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the king, the government, and the people.

The Council of Ministers described these elections as an advanced qualitative step on the road for the Palestinian people to build their independent state on their national territory with holy Jerusalem as its capital. [passage omitted]

Saudi Prince Reiterates Kingdom's Support for Bahrain

LD2201230696 Riyadh Saudi Arabian Kingdom Radio Network in Arabic 2230 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd- al-'Aziz, the second deputy prime minister, minister of defense and aviation and inspector general, had a telephone contact with His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah, the amir of the sisterly State of Bahrain.

During the telephone contact, the second deputy prime minister congratulated His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Bin-Salman Al Khalifah on the advent of the blessed month of Ramadan.

His royal highness stressed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's support and solidarity with the State of Bahrain, and its denunciation of the riots and subversive acts that targeted Bahrain's security and stability.

His highness also expressed the kingdom's standing beside the State of Bahrain, and wished it more stability, progress, and prosperity.

Yemen

Yemeni Military Deployments Reported Around Yafi'

MM2201134796 London AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT in Arabic 22 Jan 96 pp 1, 4

[Report by 'Abd-al-Salam Tahir: "Fears of New Escalation, Yemeni Military Deployments Besiege Tribes in Yafi'"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Aden — Arrivals from Yafi' in Abyan Governorate told AL-SHARQ AL-AWSAT yesterday that large deployments of government forces have begun to besiege the Yafi' area as a whole, not just Rusud Directorate, which witnessed limited clashes with government forces on 7 January.

The arrivals said that the forces are trying to besiege the area from all directions, and that they are equipped with heavy weapons, including tanks and artillery.

Information indicates that nonregular forces formed from among so-called "mujahidin militias" are backing the government forces.

The arrivals pointed out that troops have been deployed on all axes surrounding Yafi' from the south and the north via Jubayl al-Barq, Hattat, al-'Askariyah, Hattab, and al-Hadd. They said that the deployments exceed five brigades in size, but this seems to be exaggerated.

This situation threatens a new escalation in the situation, especially as the Nafi' tribes have still not agreed to hand over their arms.

Meanwhile, the tribal delegation that arrived in Sanaa — accompanied by the Yafi' tribes' chief, Fadil Bin-Muhammad 'Aydarus al-'Afifi, Yemeni minister of state for expatriate affairs — is still in Sanaa. It has so far been unable to meet with Yemeni President 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih or parliament Speaker Shaykh 'Abdallah Bin-Husayn al-Ahmar to secure a tribal solution to the problem.

The problem erupted in Rusud Directorate about two weeks ago because of the tribes' refusal to hand over their heavy weapons to the security forces. The director of Rusud Directorate and others were killed in clashes that occurred after the arrest of some members of these tribes, which freed their detainees by force.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

'Authoritative Sources' on Readiness for Resolution

NC2201142396 Paris AFP in English 1150 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nicosia, Jan 22 (AFP)—Iraq is ready to implement a UN oil-for-food resolution as long as it does not have to make a public statement recognising it, the weekly Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported Monday [22 January].

"Iraq agrees that the resolution is enforceable under Chapter VII of the UN Charter and is ready to implement its terms without infringing on its sovereignty and in accordance with discussions on the UN Secretariat," the specialist MEES said, quoting authoritative sources.

Baghdad however wants to avoid having to publicly accept resolution 986 adopted by the UN Security Council in April under which Iraq could sell a billion dollars worth of oil every quarter to buy food and medicines.

It had previously ruled out any discussion of the resolution saying it was a threat to its sovereignty because of the tight UN controls which would be imposed on the oil sales.

But now it maintains that "nowhere is it specifically stated in the resolution that Baghdad must publicly declare its acceptance of it," MEES said.

The aim of proposed talks with UN Secretary General Butrus Butrus-Ghali, for which a date and venue has not yet been set, would therefore be to reach "a pragmatic compromise which would allow Iraq to implement the resolution without changing its previous position on it."

Although Iraqi President Saddam Husayn continues to have his doubts about the resolution he has "allowed diplomats to explore ways of implementing it within narrow limits and restricted terms of reference."

News last week that Iraq had agreed to discuss the resolution with the UN caused the struggling Iraqi dinar to soar against the dollar as happy Iraqis fired shots of joy in the streets.

UN sanctions, imposed when Iraq invaded Kuwait in August 1990, have brought the Iraqi economy to its knees, sending the dinar spinning into free-fall and leading to shortages and food rationing.

Iraq has mainly objected to clauses in resolution 986 under which the oil would be exported via a pipeline in Turkey and part of the money raised would be used for humanitarian aid for the Kurds who control northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad.

MEES reported that an extra 30 million dollars could be added to the quarterly billion to cover the costs of any duties imposed by Turkey for the use of the pipeline.

And it said there could be several ways of overcoming Iraq's reservations on aid to the Kurds in the north.

At current prices, a billion dollars of oil would translate into 700,000 barrels per day (bpd).

Under the resolution after 90 days, Butrus-Ghali could ask for a larger sum to be allocated depending on his assessment of the humanitarian situation in the country, and after 180 days the resolution can be renewed.

Opposition Reports Attacks Against 'Regime' Troops

JN2201183896 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1845 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Within the framework of the jihad operations aimed at preventing the military forces from entrenching their positions inside the villages and cities of al-Nasiriyah Governorate, a group of the Islamic resistance attacked a convoy of the regime's troops while traveling on the road between al-'Amarah and al-Nasiriyah. The sources said that the resistance group focused its attack, launched on 12 January, on the tires of the military convoy. They added that the commander of the unit, a captain, was killed in the attack. Five other unit members were injured.

The sources said that the car of the criminal commander of the unit sustained heavy damages and its wheels flew to the other side of the road.

Another attack was earlier carried out by the mujahidin against a military vehicle near Abu-'Ijl area. Three officers were killed in the attack.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Peres To Meet 'Arafat This Week as 'Gesture' After Election

TA2201184196 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres will meet with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat at the Erez checkpoint this week. Our political correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that the meeting is a gesture on Peres' part in view of the successful elections process.

Peres Comments on Palestinian Elections, Syria, Displaced

NC2201185896 London MBC Television in Arabic 1800 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Nabil al-Khatib and Basim al-Jamal; place and dated not given—recorded; Peres speaks in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Peres] By and large the elections were free and impressive. In a way, they have approved the Oslo agreements, the two of them, with a very serious majority, showing that the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and [Islamic] Jihad can only use rifles and bombs to try to kill peace and actually they will kill the Palestinian chances because what the Palestinians have achieved by negotiations, they could never have achieved by terror or violence. We ourselves are glad with it because we would like to see a Palestinian neighbor that lives in peace, that developed its economy, that guards its own identity, and that is becoming a democratic experience. When I think about all the measures that can guarantee peace in the future, none of them would equal a democratic society.

[Al-Khatib] Regarding the Syrian track, Mr. Peres, the impression is that you have made some progress in connection with the central issues? What about the borders and the water issues?

[Peres] These are essential issues for the Syrians and for us and we have to look to solutions. Name calling won't help.

[Al-Khatib] When you talk about border demarcation with Syria, do you mean the 1923 border?

[Peres] I don't like right now to go into those sort of negotiations. We have the [UN Security Council Resolutions] 242 and the 338 assumption, which has also a relation to the borders; and in principle they have accepted the 242 and 338, including the territorial side of it.

[Al-Jamal] I believe that every Palestinian appreciates your decision to allow the members of the Palestine National Council to return. What about the other deportees? Will they be allowed to return also?

[Peres] That is a different story, because I cannot solve one problem by creating another problem. There is a limit to how much can this country absorb, but there is a four-partite committee that has to negotiate the problem of the displaced persons. The committee has already met two or three times and they have to do still a great job.

Peres Comments on Elections, PNC, Amendment of Covenant

TA2301123796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1105 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee was today briefed by Major General Oren Shahor about the elections in the territories. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres briefed the committee on political issues. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports:

[Begin recording] [Nir] Emerging from the meeting, the prime minister spoke with Knesset correspondents. He was asked about his meeting with Yasir 'Arafat tomorrow:

[Peres] I believe the Palestinian Authority [PA] is trying to do what it has to do to prevent terrorism — although it is always possible to do more — because terrorism poses a threat to it. After the PA achieved such an overwhelming majority, it is the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] rifle and the Islamic Jihad bomb that threaten its wellbeing. I therefore believe that 'Arafat has a real interest in preventing the Palestinian achievements from dying out because of terrorism perpetrated by a minority.

[Nir] It is to be assumed that the issue of Hamas terrorism will be raised during the prime minister's meeting with Yasir 'Arafat tomorrow. The prime minister was also asked about the possibility of Nayif Hawatimah's return to the territories.

[Peres] We announced that all Palestine National Council [PNC] members will be permitted to return for the PNC session. If Hawatimah or somebody else wants to come, then let them. They do not, however, want to. Apparently they have weightier considerations than those attributed to them in Israel.

[Nir] Peres was also asked about the possibility that the PLO will adopt a new covenant, thereby annulling the previous one.

[Peres] This is not possible. If the covenant is not annulled it will still be in existence. PLO members

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

can either abide by the written agreement between us, namely, the Oslo B accord, or they can leave that organization. It is perfectly clear that they cannot be members of two organizations, one that wants to hold peace negotiations with Israel in a peaceful way, and the other calling for Israel's destruction.

[Nir] It is assumed that the issue of the Palestinian Covenant will also be raised in tomorrow's meeting with Yasir 'Arafat. [end recording]

Peres Rejects 'Abbas Remarks, Denies Review on Prisoners

TA2201182096 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Eli Nisan at the Knesset on 22 January—recorded, in Hebrew with Arabic subtitles; translated from the Hebrew]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Nisan] Sir, what do have to say about Abu-Mazin's [Mahmud 'Abbas] remarks that the elected Palestinian Council will announce Palestinian independence within three years?

[Peres] I do not collect declarations, and they do not impress me. There is an agreement which each side must honor.

[Nisan] Abu-Mazin said: We will repeal the Palestinian National Covenant, and we will declare a Palestinian state. How do you view the link between these two things?

[Peres] There is no link between them. Each side — we and the Palestinians — must abide by what is written in the agreement. Neither side can act contrary to it.

[Nisan] Will Israel permit all the members of the Palestine National Council [PNC] to enter the territories in order to revoke those clauses in the covenant?

[Peres] Yes, yes.

[Nisan] Within the framework of the negotiations with the Palestinians, is the possibility of releasing terrorists who have blood on their hands being considered?

[Peres] No, up to now I have not considered that.

[Nisan] Are deliberations being held?

[Peres] No, not with regard to those with Jewish blood on their hands.

[Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew at 1500 GMT on 22 January carries remarks by Justice Minister David Liba'i after his meeting with his Palestinian counterpart, Furayh Abu-Middayn. In a recorded passage, Liba'i says: "If terrorism is halted and the Palestinian Authority [PA] continues to prove that it is fighting terrorism and considers it a danger to the continuation of good relations between Israel and the PA, then I believe we will be able to reconsider the release of Palestinian prisoners."]

[Nisan] On the eve of the second round of negotiations with the Syrians at the Wye Plantation, how do you view the possibility of making progress with the Syrians?

[Peres] The possibility exists. The question is the pace at which Syria will progress, but we will wait for the Wye Plantation talks to see that. I do not want to speculate or blame anybody. There is no need for that. Let us negotiate in a good atmosphere and in a quiet manner.

Israel: Commentary Views Impact of Abrogation of Covenant

TA2201144096 Tel Aviv DAVAR RISHON in Hebrew 22 Jan 96 p 7

[Commentary by Daniyel Ben-Simon: "And Now on to the Abrogation of the Covenant"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The campaign to abrogate the Palestinian Covenant will probably gather momentum in the weeks ahead. Prime Minister Shim'on Peres linked the continued implementation of the peace process with the Palestinians to its abrogation. According to the Oslo B agreement, this must be done two months after the elected Palestinian parliament convenes. To date, Yasir 'Arafat has claimed that he does not have the necessary majority of Palestine National Council [PNC] members to do it. Israel understood his problems and put off the date several times, but the Israeli Government's ultimatum seems serious this time. Failure to cancel the covenant will lead to a freeze in the peace process with the Palestinians.

This old covenant has been hovering over their heads since the signing of the Oslo agreements. It was born at the height of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and included particularly troublesome clauses calling for Israel's destruction. Most countries made recognition of the PLO conditional on the abrogation of the covenant or at least its "destruction clauses."

Seven years ago, in the course of an official visit to France during which he declared that he recognizes Israel's right to exist, 'Arafat was given a golden opportunity to clear the air. Asked by journalists about the covenant, the PLO leader replied that it was no longer valid or, as he put it, caduc [last word printed in French]. The Labor government settled for 'Arafat's statement. Being pragmatic, Rabin and Peres did not attach importance to the Palestinian Covenant. "Israel is a fait accompli," Peres said at the time, "and I don't

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

need the PLO's seal of approval." Rabin also expressed himself in the same vein.

Yet the continued existence of the written covenant became the most effective weapon of the right-wing parties against the Oslo agreement. They seized every possible occasion to needle Rabin and Peres over the failure to abrogate it. This worked so well that the demand to cancel it became an unequivocal Israeli condition in the Oslo B agreements.

This is the reason for Peres' daring decision to allow all the PNC signatories to the covenant, including rejectionist leaders George Habash, Ahmad Jibril, and Nayif Hawatimah, to enter Israel. 'Arafat had always claimed that as long as most PNC members were outside the territories, he could not muster the required majority to cancel the covenant. Now the situation has changed altogether.

There is no doubt that the cancellation will not be easy. The Palestinians claim that the covenant is the only deterrent weapon left in their hands. The feeling in the street is that the Palestinian problem will not be solved as long as the Jerusalem and refugee issues remain unresolved. In contrast, Peres cannot afford to go to the elections without having the covenant canceled, simply because it has become the right wing's main weapon against the agreement with the PLO.

Likud leaders want to highlight two issues in the election campaign: Jerusalem's integrity and the PLO's continuing aspiration to annihilate Israel. Their main aim will be to undermine the credibility of the PLO and 'Arafat, and the means they will use is the Palestinian Covenant. In recent months, Binyamin Netanyahu, Beni Begin, Ari'el Sharon, Moshe Qatzav, Tzahi Hanegbi, and others have used the existence of the covenant to explain their wariness of the agreements with the PLO. Its abrogation will compel these distinguished gentlemen to look for an alternative argument. This will be no easy feat, in view of the fact that the arrangement is proceeding rather nicely and that the right wing's prophecies of doom have not materialized.

The covenant illustrates the complexity of the Palestinian problem. Most Palestinians still live outside the territories, in Arab countries. Although it is an anachronistic body, they perceive the PNC as representing their aspirations, primarily what they call "the right of return." The elections held two days ago could lead to a reconciliation between these two entities: the Palestinians outside and inside the territories. The PNC members' arrival in the territories will give the final seal of approval to the arrangement Israel signed with the Palestinian Authority.

And a last word about the Israeli angle. Many Palestinians perceive the covenant as a reminder of the "original sin" which led to their eviction from the land they considered theirs. To many left-wing Israelis, the covenant was born as a result of what they term "the historic injustice" done to the Palestinians. More than striving for Israel's destruction, the covenant is seen by many as a refusal to come to terms with the "original sin" that took place in the years preceding the establishment of the state.

Therefore, the abrogation of this document may dispel the black clouds that have been hovering over the justness of the Zionist movement since its inception. It will also open a new chapter in the relations between two national movements that have been engaged in a bloody conflict over a small piece of land claimed by both.

Sharon Urges 'Arafat To End 'Terror' Against Israel

MS2301095596 London THE DAILY TELEGRAPH in English 23 Jan 96 p 18

[Article by Ariel Sharon, Likud member of Israeli parliament: "Force 'Arafat to End the Terror"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] So Yasir 'Arafat is now president of the executive authority on the West Bank, after an election supervised by the international community of observers. The Palestine authority now has a greater understanding of Israel's democracy, and Israel can be proud of its contribution to the process.

It must be noted, however, that dissenting candidates were intimidated in the course of the elections, and forced to stand down on the personal instructions of 'Arafat. Journalists, too, came under pressure.

This is all of a piece with 'Arafat's record. Since the Oslo agreement was signed two-and-a-half years ago, 164 Israelis have been killed and 800 injured by Palestinian terrorists, a total three times higher than in any equivalent period during the most difficult moments of the intifada.

What of the labour government's response? The Israeli public urged it to put stronger pressure on 'Arafat to take firm steps to stop Palestinian terror. What happened? The Israeli government indicated that it could not make matters more difficult for 'Arafat because he had "major internal problems".

Two weeks ago, when one of the most brutal Palestinian terrorists, responsible for the deaths of 63 Israelis and injury of hundreds, was killed, the Palestine authority complained that Israel was making it more difficult for 'Arafat to win the election.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

'Arafat duly instructed that a Palestinian guard of honour should attend the terrorist's funeral, and that a 21-gun salute be fired in his memory — an honour normally accorded to a head of state. The Israeli government's response was a deafening silence, with a nod and a wink to the inquiring Israeli public that meant: "We must help 'Arafat win the elections."

Then, last Friday [19 January] — the day before the Palestinian election — three Hamas terrorists left Jenin, a town under the control of the Palestinian authority, and opened fire at an Israeli checkpoint, wounding an Israeli soldier, who responded and killed the three terrorists.

The Palestinian authority said the Hamas terrorists were "enemies of peace" and "enemies of the elections". Then 'Arafat hurried to organise a graveside military salute and what seemed almost another state funeral. Again, because of the election the following day, the Israeli governments did not react.

This cycle of Palestinian terrorist acts, followed by government inaction, has been a feature of the Oslo agreement since it was first signed. The Palestine authority has violated almost every provision of the agreement. These breaches have been overlooked to give 'Arafat and the Palestine authority time to organise themselves. Let him be elected, argued the government. Once he has authority he will act.

Reports of electoral difficulties in Hebron and Jerusalem have been exaggerated. Hebron is second only to Jerusalem as the most sacred town for Jews. The Jewish community resided in Hebron almost non-stop for thousands of years until 1936. With liberation in 1967, Jews resumed their right of residence. Israel made substantial concessions to enable Arabs under Israeli jurisdiction to participate in the Palestinian election.

Since the Palestinian authority now has a mandate, it must stop violating the Oslo agreement, and honour its provisions.

In my view, it should therefore:

— Delete the clauses calling for the "destruction of Israel" and the elimination of the Jewish people from the Palestinian covenant.

— Stop the calls for a Jihad (Holy War) against Israel.

— Stop proclaiming that Jerusalem will be the capital of a Palestinian state.

— Transfer unauthorised Palestinian offices from Jerusalem to areas allocated to the Palestine authority.

— Withdraw its several hundred security agents from East Jerusalem who are intimidating the Arab population.

— Round up all weapons from residents in the zone allocated to the Palestine authority.

— Extradite all terrorists to Israel who have participated in violence against Israelis since the Oslo agreement.

— Stop the killing and torturing of Arab/Israeli sympathisers who, over the years, have saved innumerable lives of both Jews and Arabs.

— Encourage peaceful co-existence by ensuring that school text books are without hatred.

The Israeli government can offer no more excuses for allowing the Palestinians to deviate from the letter of the Oslo agreement. Only its acceptance in full will enable the peace process to proceed on the path we all desire for peaceful co-existence throughout the Middle East.

Peres Approves Return of PNC Speaker to Jerusalem

TA2301081596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Shim'on Peres has approved the return of Palestine National Council [PNC] Speaker 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Sa'ih to his home in East Jerusalem. Our correspondent Yoni Ben-Menahem reports that the decision, which was reached upon the recommendation of security elements, was explained by humanitarian reasons.

Shahal on Autonomy Offices in, Roadblocks Around Jerusalem

TA2201155596 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal said today that the residents of East Jerusalem who were elected members of the Autonomy Council will not be allowed to set up offices in the city. He added that Palestinian prisoners from East Jerusalem may soon be released. Their release has been delayed for fear that they might carry out terror attacks in the city. Minister Shahal noted that he is considering the imminent removal of roadblocks located on the dividing line around Jerusalem.

IDF Imposes Curfew on Hebron After Gunfire Heard in City

TA2201202396 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 2000 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening, the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] imposed a curfew on several Arab neighborhoods of Hebron because bursts of gunfire were heard in the city.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Qiryat Arba' and Hebron Jewish settlers complained to our correspondent Gil Litman that over the past few nights, they have been hearing sounds of shooting around the city. They claim that the security forces have not reacted, and they call on the government to suspend the redeployment plans for Hebron.

Baraq Arrives in U.S., Comments on Upcoming Talks at Wye

TA2201193296 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1800 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Video report by Ya'aqov Ahime'ir]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Two days before the resumption of the Maryland talks, Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq believes that an agreement on security arrangements on the Golan will not be attained in this round either. Baraq is currently meeting with the U.S. secretaries of defense and state. Our correspondent Ya'aqov Ahime'ir reports from Washington:

[Begin recording] [Ahime'ir] Baraq and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced this evening that 'Arafat should now amend the Palestinian Covenant within the agreed two-month period and should do so directly and honestly. Only two days before the Wye Plantation talks resume, Baraq, in his meetings at the State Department as well as in his earlier meeting with Secretary of Defense Perry, stressed the essentiality of security arrangements between Israel and Syria.

[Baraq] I believe both parties will present their approaches to the issue of the security arrangements and not the shared and well-known aims of making a sudden attack impractical, reducing the incentive to launch an overall attack, and preventing the escalation of daily skirmishes into an all-out clash. There is a wide range of potential options, and they will all have to be laid down on the table, weighed against each other, and considered within the context of a possible peace agreement.

[Ahime'ir] Do you believe that an agreement on the security arrangements can be reached at the Wye Plantation talks?

[Baraq] I do not think that the aim is to attain security arrangements. This is premature. At this stage, we are talking about presenting the parties' approaches and the range of alternatives that deserve consideration. I believe this will later allow us to evaluate whether the conditions for entering full and detailed negotiations exist. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Peres Interviewed on Peace Process

MS2301094196 London FINANCIAL TIMES in English 23 Jan 96 p 17

[Report on interview with Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres by Quentin Peel and Julian Ozanne; place and date not given]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] For a man facing one of the most critical periods in the life of his country, Israeli prime minister Mr Shim'on Peres is remarkably calm.

Three months ago, 72-year-old Mr Peres was resigned to the idea of never leading Israel again, and to serving out his political career as the trusted lieutenant of Mr Yitzhaq Rabin, who replaced him as leader of the Labour Party in 1992.

Mr Peres, who first served as prime minister in the mid-1980s was thrust back into the job after Mr Rabin's murder on November 4 by a right-wing Israeli assassin.

That traumatic event demonstrated how irreconcilable are the differences among Israelis over the peace process launched by Mr Rabin and Mr Peres with the Palestinian Liberation Organisation and its leader, Mr Yasir 'Arafat.

Today Mr Peres must carry on without Mr Rabin. He appears more determined than ever to maintain the peace process, and convinced that it is the only way to ensure the survival of Israel and the stability of the entire Middle East.

In the next few weeks, he must decide whether to press ahead with a highly controversial peace deal with Syria, which will mean giving up Israel's military advantage in the Golan Heights. The alternative is to postpone the peace deal, and go for an early election to exploit the wave of public sympathy caused by the assassination of Mr Rabin.

Mr Peres's inclination is clear. "I don't feel urgency," he insists. "I feel only that what you can do today, don't postpone for tomorrow."

He likes to quote Andre Malraux, the French novelist, in his defence. "He used to say that mothers of children who are pilots are always praying their boys will fly low and slow," he says. "They don't understand that to fly high and fast is much safer. Now we have to decide if we can fly low and slow, or high and fast. I think high and fast is safer. I don't see what we gain by low and slow."

To press ahead with a Syrian peace deal now is a calculated risk. Mr Rabin was much more cautious than his successor. Mr Peres's new initiative could cause a backlash among Israeli voters already torn about the wisdom of the peace agreement with the PLO. Mr Peres

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

has to fight an election by the end of October, at the latest, and an unpopular peace deal could simply be rejected at the polls, along with his government.

Equally, a good deal with Syria could ensure his re-election, and the preservation of the whole peace process with the Palestinians, as well as the rest of the Arab states of the Middle East.

Mr Peres knows the Palestinian agreement was itself a risk, but he believes that it is already showing signs of paying off. He welcomes the high turnout in the weekend elections in the self-ruled Palestinian territory of Gaza and the West Bank as confirmation that a majority of Palestinian society is now prepared to vote in favour of the peace process, and not for armed confrontation with Israel.

He is scathing in his dismissal of radical Palestinian groups such as the Islamic Hamas movement, which continue to criticise and boycott the peace process.

"I don't think you can really argue with people who don't think rationally," he says. "Those who are criticising don't belong to the present age. They belong to yesterday."

For the first time, Palestinians were being granted a chance to elect their own representatives, run their own lives, and respond to their own economic needs.

"All this was done not because of violence, not because of terror, and not because of threats. From our standpoint, it was a moral choice. We said that we don't want to dominate another people, and we went over from saying to doing. We have no regrets. It was our free choice."

He rejects the argument that Palestinians have seen no economic benefit from the peace deal, and have little prospect of creating a viable state from the stony soil of the West Bank and the Gaza strip.

"What you need today is not resources. What you need is education, because a modern economy is based on high technology, science and education, not resources... Israel does not have any resources, but look how the economy is flourishing," he says. "We live on our brains, and not our oil," he adds, unable to resist a dig at the oil-rich Arab states.

He believes the Palestinian economy is already seeing the benefits of peace, although World Bank and International Monetary Fund statistics suggest otherwise. "There are some economic developments not taken into account by the statistics," he says. "There is strong building momentum in Gaza. You can see it on the skyline. There is agricultural development. And they can also develop great tourism in Gaza on the beach. These are not yet touched."

He admits Palestinian migrant labour, travelling to work for Israeli employers, is an essential short term part of the answer. His government has increased the number of work permits for Palestinians by some two thirds, to between 70,000 and 80,000, and he has promised to reverse the policy of attracting other foreign nationals to Israel from countries such as Romania and Thailand.

"I want to see more Palestinians work in Israel than foreigners," he says. "There were a great deal of moonlighters, and we are going to legitimise them and enable them to come openly to work."

It is his vision of promoting economic prosperity both for the Palestinians and throughout the Middle East which underpins Mr Peres' commitment to the peace process. He sees it as the guarantee of ultimate success.

"The economic input is going to be vital," he says. "Just to solve the water problem" — a key issue in talks with Syria over the future of the Golan heights — "you need investment of hundreds and hundreds of millions of dollars." Ensuring adequate water resources is a cross-border challenge which links Turkey, Syria, Israel and Jordan.

Tourism is another sector which Mr Peres believes could make a big contribution to mutual security. "I always say that 100 hotels are no less important than 1,000 military positions," he says. "When you have hotels, you create a vested interest in peace."

The Israeli prime minister has been the most passionate promoter of the planned Middle East development bank as an essential part of the peace process, in spite of strong opposition from member states of the European Union, which fear the creation of another bureaucracy.

"In the Middle East, we don't have any positive economic body, only negative economic bodies like the Arab boycott," he says. "The mere fact of having an economic body which will think in a positive way is an innovation." He also believes the bank will be able to mobilise private capital to back up government money in building an integrated regional infrastructure.

Before his vision of regional development can become a reality, however, a peace deal with Syria is needed. For that he needs to persuade President Hafiz al-Asad that an agreement which provides Israel with adequate security guarantees, in place of its military defences on the Golan, is also in his interest.

He believes that it may take the personal intervention of himself and President Asad to give those peace

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

negotiations the urgency they need. "We have to climb to a higher level of negotiations," he says, on the eve of a new round of talks between officials in Washington. "President Asad is asking what will happen if we fail in our first summit. The answer is, we will have another one."

For Mr Peres, an Asad summit is critical to winning Israeli public support. "You cannot all the time negotiate by proxy. And also, your own people are watching you, and they are saying: 'Look, if the leaders are not ready to meet, why should we think they are ready to make peace?' So there is a psychological dimension."

Both sides have agreed they can talk informally, which is already a big advance. They have also agreed any Syrian-Israeli peace deal should be part of a comprehensive Middle East peace package, involving all the friendly Arab states. "That is very important for us, and for them, because it will give Syria a leading position in the peace process," Mr Peres adds.

It is also precisely what Mr Peres needs to persuade the Israeli electorate that withdrawal from the Golan, and an agreement with such a long-standing and bitter enemy as Syria, is worthwhile. If he succeeds, it will be no mean feat.

Perhaps Mr Peres' outward calm is merely the cultivated facade of a lifelong politician, for he admits that time is running out to reach a deal before the elections.

"The time available is not plentiful," he says. "Whether something is achieved or not, we shall have our elections by October 29.

"But we don't ask the Syrians to take our dates into account, because we are ready to do everything we can to win peace, more than to win the elections." What he fails to add is that if he does not win the elections, not only a Syrian deal but the whole Arab-Israeli peace process will be in doubt.

Israel's Or: Talks With Syria To Be Longer Than Anticipated

TA2301112896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Defense Minister Ori Or says the negotiations with Syria will last much longer than anticipated. Ori Or says that to date, nobody knows what the Syrians mean when they refer to peace. The deputy defense minister spoke with our correspondent Moti 'Eden during a tour of Nahariyya and west Galilee. Or also said that not the Syrians alone are responsible for the calm recently prevailing in Lebanon, but also the IDF [Israel Defense Forces], the SLA [South Lebanese Army], and the Lebanese Government. He added that there are no guarantees that this calm will be of a lasting duration.

Article Presents Israel's Security Proposals

TA2001091796 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV (SHABAT supplement) in Hebrew 19 Jan 96 p 14

[Article by Ben Kaspit: "'Uzi Dayan's Dilemma: How To Return the Golan Heights While Preserving Israel's Deterrent Power"]

[FBIS Translated Text] This Sunday [21 January], Major General 'Uzi Dayan will depart for Maryland armed with a fat notebook. Dayan will do to the Syrians in the security sphere what Uri Savir did to them in the spheres relating to the substance of peace and normalization — namely, bombard them with proposals, ideas, alternatives, and plans.

Over the last few weeks, Israeli officials have amassed a "bank" of possible security arrangements. Some of the proposals have already been submitted in the past by Ehud Baraq in his meetings with Gen. al-Shihabi. Some were conceived in the last few days. "Let's choose from among these ideas those that are most appropriate and convenient," the Israelis will tell the Syrians.

The aim is to have the security arrangements agreed upon by the two sides provide Israel the "security package" it needs. A senior political source told MA'ARIV this week that Israel has still not given up the early warning stations, at least not formally. Israel, however, has prepared a list of proposals for possible security arrangements that can serve as adequate substitutes for such stations, if necessary.

The key concept being heard in Jerusalem at ever greater frequency is "transparency." The meaning of this concept is that both Israel and Syria open up to the other side what is happening in their armies' frontline units. The Syrian area between the Golan Heights and Damascus, for example, must be opened up to Israeli scrutiny, even with regard to what is taking place in its rear flanks, its ammunition pools, its advanced command posts, and commando units.

A sophisticated early warning station can provide Israel with such "transparency." Jerusalem officials this week prepared new ideas to provide this "transparency" by other means. One of the ideas calls for establishing observers teams which will patrol both sides of the border. These observers will be permitted to inspect the army positions and hold surprise visits.

This supervisory force will be made up of U.S. soldiers and Israeli and Syrian representatives, who will be authorized to visit whatever site they desire within the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

agreed-upon zone. Thus they will be able to ascertain, for example, that the advanced command posts are unmanned — in other words, to ascertain that there are no preparations for a surprise attack. The sides will also agree that a certain percentage of the Syrian divisions' tanks be stored in war reserves storehouses.

Another idea calls for deploying cameras, sensors, and other control equipment in key places: war reserves storehouses, ammunition pools, airfields, and ramps. Such an idea has been presented to the Syrians in a different form on a previous occasion, but their answer was negative. They claimed that this would be humiliating and that it resembles what the UN is doing in Iraq. In order to avoid this humiliation, Israel planned a tactful mechanism: The entire operation is to be carried out under clear Syrian sovereignty, under the Syrian flag, and "on the face of it," at Syria's initiative.

Joint patrol teams will be established with the participation of officers from the three sides. These patrol teams will regularly patrol both sides of the border on the Golan Heights. The Syrians are demanding reciprocity in everything concerning these measures, and Israel accepts this demand. This means opening Israel Air Force airfields to Syrian inspection visits, giving Syria permission to visit the bases of elite units in the north, and complete "transparency" in everything relating to IDF [Israeli Defense Force] operations in northern Galilee.

Apparently the Syrians are especially concerned about the Israeli commando units. A political source in Jerusalem told MA'ARIV this week that "if they give us what we need in this respect, we will have no problem in giving them what they need."

To repeat, the issue of early warning stations has still not been removed from the agenda. The initial Israeli demand for five such stations is no longer relevant, but in the security discussion held at Shim'on Peres' office last week, the army heads made it clear to the prime minister that an early warning station on the summit of Mt. Hermon is essential. Israel will propose that each year the Syrians send out a new invitation for the supervisors manning this station. The whole thing will be done under Syrian sovereignty, with Syrian goodwill, and at Syria's invitation — so long as there is an early warning station manned by supervisors. Even so, the proposal stands no real chance of being accepted. A source in Jerusalem explains: "They simply know to what an extent such a station on Mt. Hermon can get under their skin. They do not want us to know what is going on in every bedroom in Damascus."

The bottom line is as follows: If the Syrians store a large percentage of their frontline divisions' tanks in war reserves storehouses; if their ammunition pools are empty; if their airplanes' and tanks' fuel pools are empty; if electric surveillance means are posted near essential sites; if a joint officers force is established and freely patrols deep within both sides of the border; if there is an observer force that can visit any site it desires with prior warning of 24 hours only; if satisfactory "transparency" is achieved; and if to all these are added sophisticated spy planes provided by the United States and a signed agreement regarding the transfer of U.S. satellite information to Israel in real time — if all these conditions are met, Israel may forgo the Mt. Hermon early warning station.

This weekend the prime minister will conduct the last discussions in anticipation of the departure to Maryland. The security arrangements will not be the only issue to be raised there. This week Uri Savir held long talks with Noah Kinarti on the water issue. The basic working assumption is, however, that the key to a breakthrough lies in achieving some kind of magic formula that will calm the IDF, work out security arrangements that are acceptable to Syria, and provide Israel with a reasonable "security package." In other words, everything depends on 'Uzi Dayan.

Israel: 'Amir Trial Opens; Defense Problems Not To Mar Proceedings

TA2301104196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yig'al 'Amir has actually admitted to having murdered the prime minister. This is reported by our correspondent 'Anat Peleg. In a statement he made in reaction to the indictment at the opening of his trial today, Yig'al 'Amir said he did not mean to murder the prime minister as an individual but rather as a prime minister. He noted that he was motivated by the din rodef ruling issued against the prime minister. In his answer to the indictment, Yig'al 'Amir claimed that for a long time he tried to avoid the murder, adding that he would have settled for a stop to Rabin's functioning. Answering a question, Yig'al 'Amir admitted that he fired the first bullet with the intention of wounding the prime minister and that he aimed at the spine. He noted that he did not mean to murder, but fired the next two bullets just to make sure. 'Amir claims that he did not mean to harm Rabin's bodyguard.

Referring to his connections with his brother and Dror 'Adani, Yig'al 'Amir said they were not his partners and there was no conspiracy between them, but they did occasionally exchange opinions. Answering a question posed by the judge, Yig'al 'Amir admitted that his brother made changes in the bullets he used to shoot the prime minister. Our correspondent notes that 'Amir

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

ended his statement in court by noting he does not regret his deed.

After 'Amir ended his statement the prosecution decided to reduce the number of witnesses it plans to bring to court. The first witness was police investigator Nisim Da'udi, who interrogated Yig'al 'Amir after the murder. He said that when he queried 'Amir about his partners, 'Amir chose to remain silent. Goldberg, 'Amir's attorney, claimed that Yig'al 'Amir did not testify to the police of his free will, at which point the judge intervened and asked the accused whether this was true. 'Amir noted that he did speak freely and that the investigator behaved properly.

Another witness who was at the scene during the assassination, Inspector Yosef Gershom, said that after his detention Yig'al 'Amir wanted to know whether he really had murdered the prime minister.

Our correspondent reports that 'Amir claimed he is not being permitted to meet his attorney. The judge ordered the Prison Service to permit such meetings.

The issue of the defense is still unclear. Justice Edmund Levi asked the accused who is representing him, and 'Amir mentioned the name of attorney Mordekhay 'Ofri. The latter, however, informed the court this morning that he wants to resign his representation. The second attorney who represented 'Amir at court today was bewildered when he heard this. Justice Levi emphasized that the defense difficulties will not prevent a fair trial. Today's proceedings ended a short time ago, and the trial will resume 28 January.

Special Shin Bet Interrogation Methods Extended by 3 Months

TA2201155096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1500 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The ministerial committee on Shin Bet interrogation methods has extended the special permit covering the interrogation of suspects in attempts to carry out terror attacks by three months. During its session at the prime minister's bureau today, the committee was briefed on the number of suspects undergoing general interrogation and the number of people undergoing interrogation by more forceful methods.

Israel: Russian Mafia Said Involved in Knesset Campaign Financing

TA2301104996 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 23 Jan 96 p 9

[Report by Doron Me'iri]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Russian mafia has started pumping money into the Knesset election campaign. This assessment was voiced by senior Police sources yesterday.

The sources said there is no assurance that the mafia funds will necessarily be directed to new immigrant parties or to candidates who hail from the CIS: "We are dealing here with persons who operate under the guise of respectable businessmen, and it is very possible they will financially support candidates who will not even realize that the mafia is behind him." The sources added that at this stage it is hard to determine the amount of money invested by the mafia in the candidates' campaigns.

One of the sources voiced deep concern: "Even if the Police obtain specific information regarding mafia elements' funding certain Knesset candidates, it will not be able to do anything about it. The reason for this is that we are dealing here with ostensibly law-abiding people who have not committed any crime."

Several dozen senior mafia activists are operating in Israel, some of whom have even managed to obtain Israeli citizenship.

The police sources believe that only the implementation of the law against money laundering operations, which is currently being discussed in the Knesset, will be able somewhat to moderate and curtail mafia activity in Israel and disrupt its attempts to gain control over Israeli power and financial centers. The police investigations reveal that mafia members possess a fortune in "black" money and that they are massively purchasing real estate assets. It is feared that in the future they also plan to purchase giant factories and business concerns, communication networks, and public institutions.

Police figures indicate that not only the Russian mafia is operating in Israel, but several other CIS organized crime groups as well.

Israel: Baraq Seen Gaining Influence, Becoming National Leader

TA2301120496 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Jan 96 p B1

[Commentary by Yo'el Marcus: "Baraq Has Latched on to a Toehold"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Since his appointment as foreign minister, not a day has passed without hearing Ehud Baraq's voice on the radio, seeing his face on television screens, reading a short or long interview with him in some newspaper, or encountering his name in a major political report. On a strict diet and dressed in a sharp gray suit and tie — to emphasize that he is no longer an army man — he radiates conspicuous activity and what appears to be deep involvement in the peace process.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Officially he has not yet registered in his party's primaries, but Baraq is already deeply involved in the race. His main rival in the contest for leadership is Hayim Ramon. The two could be the Rabin and Peres of the early 21st century — one a party manipulator who knows all the ins and outs of the party apparatus, the other a political-security paratrooper who landed like a cherry on top of the icing. Ramon should not be dismissed, but in the meantime, he is trying to mend his relations with Peres. While Ramon needs time to rehabilitate himself from his controversial "successes" and his hasty parting from the Histadrut leadership, Baraq, with his wry smile, enjoys the media spotlight without really fulfilling a crucial operational role in the peace process. As a result, he is seen as more of a future national leader than his rival Hayim Ramon.

It is unclear who anointed Baraq a potential Labor prime minister. To Ramon it is far from obvious, but the way in which Baraq is received in party circles shows that the legend that he "was born to be prime minister" is becoming deeply rooted. He regarded the defense portfolio as a vital station on the way to realizing the legend. But in hindsight, Peres might have done him a favor by not acceding to his wish. He would have been too close to the General Staff and the defense establishment's internal rivalries to lead it as an unelected appointee. His term as chief of staff was controversial, therefore any future terrorist attack, any mishap, or any accident would have been blamed on him. Since the Foreign Ministry was the best thing going, he grabbed it.

Based on the tradition that prime ministers conduct foreign policy, the foreign minister might be a pompous figure like David Levi ("call me Jim"), a pathetic figure like Yig'al Alon under Rabin, or a UFO like Abba Eban. Baraq took over the Foreign Ministry on rough terrain, to use a military term. On the one hand, the prime minister took for himself America, the Palestinians, and the entire peace process. On the other, Yosi Beilin (the former "political director general") has Peres' left ear; and Uri Savir, with the status of semi-minister, semi-official, answers only to the prime minister. Baraq is not only the sole minister in our government to have been denied the right to replace or appoint his own director general, but also the sole minister whose director general has the right to decide on which issues to inform his boss.

But Baraq, acting like a military tactician, preferred Savir as a director general in his ministry — which enables him to be informed and enjoy what looks like a central role in the process — to the possibility of Savir's being director general of the Prime Minister's Office or a minister without portfolio, thereby emptying the Foreign Ministry of any substance. In the era of direct elections, it is not so important what a politician really does as the image he projects about his role. Baraq has apparently decided not to take on the part of pompous phony, but also not to become a foreign minister dealing with the state of relations with Tibet and Chile. He tries to make the best out of the fact that he has an independent view on the peace process: both supporting Peres' moves and having reservations about them.

He assures Peres his loyalty, but also constitutes a threat. His latest remarks express support for the negotiations with Syria and defense of Peres, but at the same time, he comes across as someone for whom security is paramount and that those pushing Peres to achieve peace at any price should not be heeded. "I am not in favor of seeing Syrian feet paddling in the waters of Lake Tiberias under any circumstances..." "We will not consider any harm to our vital security interests..." "We will not give in to al-Asad on vital issues because of packaging, procedures, or gimmicks." Gimmicks? To what and to whom was he referring?

Baraq, lacking troops and party backing, is building his image as a national leader. At this stage, his advance depends on Shim'on Peres, but Peres — who lost Rabin's security umbrella — needs neither Ramon nor Beilin, who are regraded as leftists, but Baraq, to sell the Syrian package to the Israeli people. The risk that Baraq might express reservations about the agreement with Syria, which would be harmful, is responsible for the mutual tactical dependence between Peres and his shackled minister. Baraq has latched on to a toehold.

Article Views Iraqi Refugees in Israel

96LH0048A Jerusalem AL-BAYADIR AL-SIYASI in Arabic 28 Oct 95 pp 18-19

[Unattributed article: "The Iraqis Fleeing to Israel: Who Are They? Why Do the Israeli Fuss Over Them? What Is Israel's Aim in Suddenly Granting Them Political Asylum?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Over the past two years, a number of Iraqis have succeeded in crossing the Jordanian-Israeli borders, reaching Israel, and turning themselves over to the Israeli authorities. All their news media usually raise a huge fuss over each infiltration, as though the Iraqi citizens had found no refuge anywhere in the Arab world, did not trust themselves to any Arab regime, and were not content to live in any Arab country. They preferred Israel to those countries, indeed to any other countries of the world. Israel is in a state of war with Iraq, a country with which there is deep-rooted animos-

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

ity, especially after the Gulf War and the way Iraq struck so violently at Israel.

Israel Detains 32 Iraqi Nationals

More than 30 Iraqi nationals have slipped into Israel. Israel has deported two of them to southern Lebanon, and they are still stuck in the security zone between Israel and Lebanon, because Lebanon has refused to take them in. The Israeli authorities also deported an Iraqi family that had managed to slip over the Jordanian border; it immediately returned them to Jordan. It detained 32 Iraqi nationals, who submitted to interrogation which some of them described as harsh and violent. Some of them stayed for long periods in interrogation cells while the Israeli security agencies tried to ascertain the purpose of their infiltration into Israel. After that they were moved to prisons without being brought to trial. Though they asked for political asylum, Israel refused that at first, announcing it was studying their situation and what it would do with them.

Spurious Media Frenzy Over the Iraqi Detainees

They were held, according to the Israeli authorities, in al-Ramlah Prison. After the publication of several news items about their sufferings, Israeli television discussed their case, undoubtedly with the prior arrangement with the Israeli authorities, and in a dramatic step, the Iraqi-born Israeli minister of police visited the detainees in their cells and talked to them about their demands. They said they wanted to be granted political asylum in Israel, and he told them he would talk to the Palestinian Authority [PA] about moving them to live in those territories, in Gaza and Jericho, but the majority of them refused to go to the PA territories. Only 14 Iraqi citizens agreed to go to the PA territories, with 18 refusing to go, insisting on remaining in Israel or being granted political asylum.

Immediately after that, the Iraqi detainees sued the Israeli authorities in the Israeli Supreme Court, demanding more than $6 million, in view of the fact that Israel violated international law in its treatment of them, as it has the right to detain those who request political asylum, according to international law, but if it refuses to grant them asylum, it must transfer them to some other secure place.

What's Behind the Israeli Media Frenzy Over the Iraqi Detainees?

It is clear that the Israeli Government would have dealt with Arab prisoners, of which it has so many, as it dealt with the Iraqi prisoners, only in an effort to achieve several goals:

- first, to show off the standing Israel enjoys among some citizens of Arab countries, with its economic supremacy and democratic life prompting many oppressed citizens of Arab countries, and those craving a stable and democratic life, to respect Israel in spite of the dangers they contend with to get there;
- embarrassing many Arab regimes in front of their peoples and the whole world; for how could Iraqis find a safer place to go than Israel, their country's enemy?
- acting to expose the Arab regimes before world public opinion and show up their dictatorship and constant violation of human rights. This would change the image of Israel, from being an occupier which does not respect human rights—with the citizens of major, independent Arab countries preferring Israel to their own countries.

Who Are the Iraqis? What Spurred Them To Come to Israel?

In light of all this, the question in search of an answer, for many observers, is: Who are these Iraqis? What was their motivation in slipping into Israel and requesting political asylum there rather than elsewhere? Why did they refuse to go and live in the PA territories, when they know they would be the object of the concern and care of the PA and the Palestinian people because of the genuinely fraternal relationship between the Palestinian and Iraqi peoples?

We cannot know precisely who these Iraqis are, but it is clear that they are a group of young men, under 45 years old, who were easily able to come from Iraq to Jordan. Due to their inability to find a suitable life in Jordan, they fled to Israel. There are those who think they are Iraqis who collaborated with Israel for some time and that as the result of the poor economic and security conditions and the lack of any missions for them or some danger posed to them in Iraq, they arranged their trip to Jordan and their flight to Israel. The evidence for this is that there was no military skirmish between them and the Israeli occupying forces in the areas where they infiltrated, unlike all former instances when Jordanians or Palestinians infiltrated to mount military operations against Israel. There are those who think some of them might actually have fled because of the poor conditions and their wish either to help them obtain political asylum in a European country, which they could not do from Jordan, or at least to reside in Israel. Finally, some think that some of them might actually have been sent by the Iraqi government to spy on Israel. In any case, all these possibilities exist.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

What Is Behind Granting Them Political Asylum in Israel?

After all the fuss stirred up over the Iraqi detainees, the Israeli authorities suddenly decided to grant them political asylum, with the exception of one person. The security precautions taken for them were futile, and here arises the question about the purpose of that sudden decision. We believe this decision might have been made for one of the following reasons:

- First, Israel, after failing to find a refuge for them in any European country and with some of them refusing even that out of fear for their lives, was compelled to agree to grant them political asylum, in view of the fact that they were collaborating with it, and in the end it did care about safeguarding their lives.
- Second, Israel aimed, through this fuss about them, to cover its decision to grant them political asylum, because it aimed to exploit them even as it provided them with the final service, after they serving it for so long, by embarrassing the Arab countries, especially Iraq.
- Third, The decision to keep one Iraqi in prison, on the pretext of the suspicion he was an Iraqi spy, showed the Israeli government's determination to exploit the prisoners. It also aims to mislead Arab public opinion, to conceal the truth about the fugitives, and that Israel subdued them to do what it needed before granting them political asylum.
- Fourth, Israel wanted to portray them as oppressed people in search of a safe place of refuge which only Israel could give them.
- Fifth, Israel wanted to appear humane to the world, as a protector of human rights and people's basic needs, even with the subjects of hostile countries, offering the necessary security guarantees for the individuals, as happened with the fugitives from Iraq.
- Sixth, It wanted to teach this lesson to every person considering flight to Israel (who did not spy for it): that political asylum is not guaranteed; prospective asylum-seekers are subject to interrogation and prison.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Jordanian Foreign Minister Denies Iranian Diplomat Expelled

JN2301130096 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 23 Jan 96 p 20

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman—Foreign Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti said that the Iranian diplomat, who was declared as persona non grata in Jordan, has not been expelled, and that he was only declared as persona non grata.

Replying to a question posed by deputy Dhib 'Abdallah on this issue, al-Kabariti added that this matter does not conflict with our definite desire to build excellent relations with all states, including the Islamic states, based on mutual respect and not on breaching the charters that govern diplomatic relations among states.

Al-Kabariti said that Jordan's interest can be achieved by protecting the Jordanian people's stability, safety, and security.

Cuts in Jordanian Exports to Iraq Have 'No Political Bearings'

JN2301124296 Amman JORDAN TIMES in English 23 Jan 96 , pp 1, 7

[Report by P. V. Vivekanand]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Amman—Jordanian exports to Iraq in return for oil will be halved to $200 million in fiscal 1996 because of the nearly $1.2 billion in accumulated Iraqi debts to the Kingdom, official sources said Monday.

The sources confirmed a Reuter report that Jordan and Iraq had reached an agreement to this effect during a meeting between the ministers of trade of the two countries when they met last week to discuss the annual bilateral trade accord.

The decision would not affect exports to Iraq in return for cash, but such deals are rare these days, businessmen say.

The Kingdom gets about 50,000 barrels of crude and 20,000 to 25,000 barrels of fuel oil from Iraq every day in part settlement of Baghdad's debts to Amman. That represents all of the Kingdom's daily needs of crude and fuel oil.

The sources stressed that the decision had no political bearings and was based on a consideration of the mounting Iraqi debts to Jordan estimated at nearly $1,200 million.

The debts were accumulated during the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war and since then as a result of the Iraqi inability to pay cash for its imports following the imposition of sweeping international trade sanctions against that country after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The oil exports to Jordan are exempt from the sanctions since no cash changes hands, but represent an important source for cash strapped Iraq for its needs of food and medicine, which are also exempt from the trade embargo.

Payment for private sector exports to Iraq were made from an annual $400 million escrow account that the government maintained at the Central Bank of Jordan. [passage omitted]

The move to reduce the flow of goods in return for oil comes amid signs that Iraq might be willing to consider a United Nations offer for limited oil sales to raise funds for food and medicine. If the Iraq-United Nations discussions were successful, then Baghdad is expected to be able to pay cash for its imports.

"Absolutely not," said one source when asked whether the obviously cool political relations between Amman and Baghdad had prompted the decision to reduce trade.

"The decision was based purely on economic and financial grounds, and has nothing to do with the state of political relations between the two countries."

That was a reference to an apparent strain in ties after Jordan granted asylum to Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's two daughters and their husbands, one of them a close confident to President Saddam and the brains behind the country's clandestine military programme, who defected to the Kingdom in August.

Iraq has also criticised Jordan's suggestion that a federation could be answer for the deep divisions among the country's three major communities and the Kingdom support for calls for democracy and political pluralism as well as respect for human rights in its eastern neighbour.

Iraqi Minister of Trade Muhammad Mahdi Salih, in an interview with the local weekly tabloid SHIHAN last week, said his country rejected the Jordanian call as an "interference" in its internal affairs. Jordan has denied the charge.

"Iraq, with its independence and sovereignty, decides for itself in all its internal affairs just as it does not interfere in others' internal affairs," Mr. Salih was quoted as saying by SHIHAN. "We also believe that no other country has any right to interfere in the internal affairs of Jordan."

"We hope our relationship with Jordan will remain strong and good," he told SHIHAN, adding that the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

defection of Husayn Kamil, President Saddam's son-in-law who served as the country's minister of industry, did not have any impact on Iraqi-Jordanian relations.

According to the minister, the Iraqi oil supply to Jordan had gone up in 1995 and 50 per cent of its was supplied free under orders from President Saddam.

The move to halve Jordanian exports to Iraq was sure to draw strong opposition from Jordanian exporters, many of whom argue that the bulk of their production is sent to Iraq.

"We have heard about the reduction in exports to Iraq but we do not have any official notification in this regard," said an official at the Amman Chamber of Industry, a leading advocate of increased trade ties with Iraq.

"If it is true that there is indeed a decision to reduce exports to Iraq then we are going to fight it," said the official, who did not want to be identified. "Many Jordanian industries, which are members of the Amman Chamber of Industry, would suffer badly if exports to Iraq are reduced."

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Buwayz: Lebanon 'Ready' for 'Battle at All Levels'

MM2301133496 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 23 Jan 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Buwayz: Israel Must Commit Itself to Full Withdrawal"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, AL-HAYAH — Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz has said that "we are on the threshold of changes, and the current stage involves new factors that did not exist before." He stressed that "Lebanon will be ready to shoulder the responsibility for its options and engage in the battle for the defense of its rights, which lie in the recovery of its occupied land."

He said that "if Israel wants peace, it must commit itself to a full withdrawal to the lines beyond the border." And in a manner that "would enable the Lebanese state to extend its authority through its own capabilities."

Buwayz received members of the diplomatic corps at Butrus Palace yesterday. They were headed by Joseph Hubays.

Following Hubays' speech, in which he stressed that the corps' capabilities are at the foreign minister's disposal, Buwayz emphasized that the Middle East region "is entering a new stage in the peace process, especially after the developments it has witnessed over recent months." He said, "we are certainly on the threshold of changes, and this stage involves new factors that did not exist before. There are changes which are bound to bear fruit in one way or another, even if the speed of developments is still unclear. There are certain moves which must be given the desired attention."

He stressed that "when the time is ripe Lebanon will be willing to shoulder the responsibility for its options and to fight a political battle to defend its rights, which lie principally in recovering its occupied land, all its land. What is required is a commitment to a full withdrawal to the lines beyond the internationally recognized borders, because Lebanon's borders are not negotiable — a full withdrawal in a manner that enables the Lebanese state to extend its authority through its own capabilities. This means that there is no role for any organizations [munazzamat] that Israel might try to impose on Lebanese sovereignty."

He said: "If Israel wants peace, it should begin by making clear and precise statements devoid of any maneuvers. It should move from the media battle, through which it is trying to achieve victories, to a rational political battle. Then Lebanon would be ready, qualified, and determined to exercise its sovereignty in every sense of the word, and to prove that there is a government, a state, and legitimate regular forces ready to extend the state's authority. After a long march, Lebanon has now reinforced its pillars and foundations. There is a Lebanese authority, regardless of the contradictions and internal splits in the democratic game. There is an authority for Lebanon — an authority whose decisions are its own. And there are Lebanese institutions ready when the time comes to assume all their responsibilities in the south."

Buwayz stressed that "Lebanon is ready for that battle at all levels, political, security, economic, and cultural. The continued skepticism we hear from time to time in the framework of the internal game is abnormal in a homeland facing such challenges."

Lebanon: SLA Commander on Peace, Accusations of Treason

NC2201165096 Beirut AL-NAHAR in Arabic 15 Jan 96 p 7

[Interview with Major General Antoine Lahd, South Lebanese Army commander, by Butrus al-Rishani "before the referral of the military prosecutors case against him to a military investigating judge demanding his arrest on 16 January"; place not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [al-Rishani] Does your command have any specific vision of the future of the South Lebanese Army [SLA] and the inhabitants of the border area and Jazzin if a peace agreement is reached between Lebanon and Israel?

[Lahd] The future of the border area, Jazzin, and the SLA is directly linked to the Middle East peace negotiations and to the conclusion of a peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel. The situation will remain as it is until peace is established. I believe that the official peace treaty between Lebanon and Israel will include clauses concerning the inhabitants of the border area and the SLA and will be guaranteed by parties involved in the peace process. We will hand over everything to the Lebanese State once the treaty is implemented, on the condition that we approve of the main outlines of the agreement because we want guarantees for the future. We do not accept the SLA being labelled as a traitor or agent, as they are saying, after all the sacrifices it has made. The inhabitants of the border area also do not accept being called agents. The word "agent" is of relative significance and has not been accurately defined so far.

The SLA will not abandon its role easily before peace is achieved. Israel will not sign the peace agreement if the general principles we have agreed on with the Israeli leadership are not applied. These principles are clear and they include the repeal of all the decisions issued against

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

the sons of the area and the SLA elements, specially the judiciary decisions.

We welcome the state on the condition that it will guarantee the safety of the area's people and that a certain formula is reached that will uphold the honor of the SLA, its military personnel, and the security and dignity of the people living in the south. It is difficult to foresee what will happen if this is not achieved.

[Al-Rishani] There is a complete contradiction between your stand and that of the Lebanese Government, which regards the SLA as an enemy collaborator?

[Lahd] The Lebanese State has no right to and cannot regard the SLA and the peoples of the border area as Israel's agents. The state should look realistically at what happened in this area when it abandoned the area and shirked its duty to defend the Lebanese citizens. The inhabitants of the southern villages and towns were forced to form small military groups to confront the Palestinians. Things then developed with my arrival in the area in 1984. There was neither an SLA nor a Lebanese Army in the area at that time. War was raging on all fronts, from western al-Shahhar to the mountain and Beirut. A large number of Lebanese Army soldiers then fled to our area in the wake of the western al-Shahhar battle. We welcomed them and secured for them the means to join the command in Beirut.

The state's absence forced the inhabitants to carry arms to defend themselves and the sons of the border area. They are Lebanese and proud of their identity like all Lebanese. The Lebanese State should be happy when it returns to the border area which maintained its loyalty to the homeland despite the harsh conditions it had to go through. It is the state's responsibility to give all the necessary guarantees to the inhabitants of the south and to welcome their return to Lebanese society. It should not look at them as agents.

We built the SLA on the Lebanese Army model. Its ranks include members from the Lebanese communities, that is Shiite, Druze, Sunnis, and Christians. The majority of the SLA soldiers today are Muslims and this shows the local inhabitants' support for its mission.

Briefly, the state and the official authority are responsible for what happened in the south and for the presence of the SLA, regardless of how much this state and authority are legitimate and to what extent they represent the national will. Had it not been for the SLA presence in Jazzin, the area would have been depopulated as was the case east of Sidon when the "Lebanese Forces" withdrew, paving the way for the entrance of the armed organizations. Its inhabitants were displaced and have not returned to this day.

[Al-Rishani] Can Israel and the SLA command test the Lebanese Government's intentions through withdrawal from Jazzin?

[Lahd] I mentioned what had happened in eastern Sidon after the withdrawal of the Lebanese Forces. As a matter of fact, if we withdraw from Jazzin, the so-called resistance will enter the town and turn it into a battlefield to fight us. This would mean the destruction of Jazzin and the eviction of its inhabitants. We totally reject this. We defended Jazzin and the area and lost martyrs there. We will not hand it over to the Lebanese Government if it is unable to protect it. It still seems unable to do that because it is not the master of its decision. There is no room in the south for a solution similar to "the Gaza-Jericho First." Either there will be a comprehensive solution to the entire border area and Jazzin, or none at all.

[Al-Rishani] What you propose completely contradicts the Lebanese Government's stance, which is based on implementing Security Council Resolution 425.

[Lahd] The Madrid Conference was held on the basis of the principle of land for peace and Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. U.S. President George Bush said this but did not mention Resolution 425. As for the diplomatic statements made by envoys of the countries that support Resolution 425 during their visits to Lebanon, they are made for the sake of courtesy and propriety. Resolution 425 does not exist in the negotiations. Achieving peace in itself would lead to implementing and burying Resolution 425. As for the Lebanese Government's talk of implementing this resolution unconditionally, it is impossible. Even the armistice agreement between Lebanon and Israel involved several conditions, such as defining the number of soldiers and heavy weapons. The talk about unconditional withdrawal is illogical. Resolution 425 is a result of the "al-Litani operation." Despite this, the Palestinian organizations remained in the south and continued to open fire, which led to the "Galilee operation." The Lebanese Government must realize that it is negotiating with a government and that there is no sense in talking about unconditional withdrawal. I would like to ask why Resolution 520, which provided for the withdrawal of foreign armies from Lebanon, has not been implemented? Speaker Birri was opposed to going to the Madrid Conference and then he changed his stance over night. There are several realities which the Lebanese leaders ignore when they talk about negotiations.

[Al-Rishani] The Lebanese Government emphasizes that four army brigades are ready to deploy in the border area?

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

[Lahd, interrupting] We are ready to hand over the security tasks in the south. However, these brigades can only enter the area when a peace agreement is signed between Lebanon and Israel. Frankly speaking, we welcome the Lebanese army's entry into the area and the "SLA" is not a hindrance to its entry provided that peace is achieved. It is useless to think of deploying the Lebanese army in Jazzin or any other area where we are deployed before peace is achieved. The matter has nothing to do with the number of brigades but is a political affair that needs to be settled before discussing the military details.

[Al-Rishani] Are you sure the Lebanese Army will enter the south?

[Lahd] Key officials in the Lebanese regime have repeatedly stated that they will deploy 25,000 Lebanese soldiers in the border zone. They did not talk about the Syrian Army. I personally doubt that Israel would allow the Syrian Army to enter the south, knowing that it rejects its entry into the Golan. I wish from the bottom of my heart that the Lebanese Army could extend its control over the border zone once peace is attained and prevent any armed organizations, regardless of who they are or who is behind them, from maintaining a presence on Lebanese territories.

[Al-Rishani] What are the prospects for the deployment of multinational or international forces in the border zone and the establishment of warning stations?

[Lahd] I see no reason for this, unless the Lebanese State is unable to provide security in the border zone, but it says the exact opposite. As for monitoring, I believe that the warning station on Mount Hermon is capable of scanning both the south and the Golan. There are also balloons and satellites. There is no need for permanent stations in the south. As for the deployment of international forces in the south, it depends on the Lebanese State's ability. However, I personally prefer the Lebanese Army's control over any other forces.

[Al-Rishani] Could you lay down your arms before Hizballah and the other forces hostile to you drop theirs?

[Lahd] Hizballah declares that its goals will be fulfilled upon the withdrawal of the Israeli Army. The aspired to peace agreement would secure this goal. Thus, there is no logic for Hizballah to continue its operations after such an agreement. The question is: Should Hizballah deviate from this logic, would Syria continue to back it in fighting Israel after it had signed its own peace agreement? I do not believe that would be logical. If Hizballah's goals are Lebanese, they must come to an end once peace is concluded. But if it seeks to liberate Jerusalem by proceeding from the south, then this is the responsibility of the Lebanese State, because the security of Israel's northern borders would be under its control. The decision would be up to the Lebanese and the Syrians, because any disruption of security would ruin the south once again. I do not believe that anybody in Syria or Lebanon would allow Hizballah to continue its military operations. This party must shift to politics. Likewise, the 10 Palestinian organizations opposed to peace must be disarmed. This process would also include disarming SLA. This process is supposed to be in the interest of the Lebanese Army. It is impossible for the logic of fighting Israel and the logic of peace to live side by side. The Lebanese paid a heavy price when they tried to reconcile the logic of revolution with the logic of the state. We must not forget what happened when the Palestinians were allowed to be armed and to organize themselves as a military force on Lebanese territories. They did this after they had been warmly welcomed as refugees during the time of [former president] Bisharah al-Khuri and [former prime minister] Riyad al-Sulh, or as deportees from Jordan after September 1970. I remember the humiliation to which the Lebanese Army officers were subjected here during their missions in the south when they had to obtain the Palestinians' permission to go and leave their barracks. The Lebanese State has made several mistakes throughout its history, and I hope they will not recur.

[Al-Rishani] Armed Islamic groups are continuing their operations against Israel despite the peace agreements between Israel and Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians.

[Lahd] These are intermittent operations carried out by scattered groups. The Jordanian and Egyptian armies block such operations. Prior to 1967, some operations were launched across the Syrian border into Israel. They were coordinated with the Syrian State. In Lebanon the situation is different: The Lebanese State does not take part in the war but plays patron to it. When peace comes, the state will not be able to continue having a double standard and sponsor acts of belligerency. I don't think that Syria has an interest in continuing these attacks either.

[Al-Rishani] Do you fear the prospect of revenge attacks against the "civil administration" committees and your own troops after peace is reached?

[Lahd] Let us define the "civil administration." These committees were formed to run the affairs of the border villages and townships and to maintain communication between the SLA and the population with the aim of knowing their needs and organizing their daily lives. This was necessary because the municipal councils and the mukhtars no longer existed: Some of these officials had died and some had left the area. Didn't Walid

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Junblatt establish a civil administration when he was running the mountain area's affairs in isolation from the state? Where are these institutions now? [passage omitted]

[Al-Rishani] It is being said that Lebanon will pay the price for the Israeli-Syrian political settlement. What do you have to say about this?

[Lahd] I don't know what price Lebanon is to pay. If this means that foreign armies will remain indefinitely in Beirut, then this is a matter left to the Lebanese themselves. The Israelis will not link their withdrawal from the south to the withdrawal of the Syrian, Iranian, and Palestinian armies from Beirut. They will not halt the peace for Lebanon's sake. Now the Lebanese people must decide: either to reject this situation and resist it or be subservient to Syria. The Syrians requested union with Egypt in 1958 but in 1961 they rebelled against Egyptian hegemony. The Lebanese people must do the same unless we have less patriotism than the Syrians. If that is the case, then Lebanon must not continue to exist. I am not against special relations with Syria, nor do I fear that the Syrians will excel over us in the economic, agricultural, or cultural spheres. Nevertheless, the relationship between Lebanon and Syria must be reorganized in a context of mutual respect for both countries' independence and sovereignty. I favor coordinating the two countries' higher level foreign policies but I am against the Syrian Army's continued presence in Lebanon. If the Lebanese State is unable to maintain domestic security with its own power after peace is reached and the Israeli army withdraws and it asks for the help of foreign forces, there will be numerous domestic problems. I hope that the Syrians and Lebanese will reach an agreement that will preserve the two nations' dignity. [passage omitted]

Lebanese 'Resistance' Detonates Bomb Under SLA Patrol

NC2201142296 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1400 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Resistance fighters detonated an explosive device under a Lahd militia [South Lebanese Army, SLA] patrol on the Hula road inside the occupied border strip this afternoon. The explosion wounded a member of Lahd's militia. He was transferred to a hospital inside occupied Palestine.

Lebanon: SLA Radio Confirms Soldier Wounded by Blast

NC2201153396 Kafr Killa Voice of the South in Arabic 1430 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A South Lebanese Army [SLA] soldier suffered moderate injuries this afternoon when an explosive device planted by terrorists at the Hula crossroads went off. He was taken to Bint Jubayl Hospital.

The terrorists bombarded an SLA post in the Hula area but caused no injuries to the personnel manning the post. SLA and Israeli army artillery returned the fire.

Lebanese 'Resistance' Claims 3 Israelis Killed

NC2001170896 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli occupation forces escalated the tension in the south with an artillery bombardment of al- Nabatiyah and Kafr Rumman this afternoon. Citizen Hasan Muhammad Tirani was wounded in the shelling of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa. He was taken to Ghandur Hospital for treatment.

The occupation forces bombarded al-Jabal al-Rafi' from al- Zaffatah after raking Kafr Tibnit with machine guns this morning.

The Resistance announced in a statement that one of its groups targeted an Israeli foot patrol along the al-Dabshah-'Ali al-Tahir road at 1645 tonight, killing three patrol members. The Resistance also announced that it attacked the Tuhrah and al-Suwayda' positions with machine guns and rockets.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Syrian Commentary Emphasizes Importance of U.S. Participation in Talks

JN2201174896 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Gentlemen: In two days, the Syrian and Israeli delegations will begin a third round of talks in Maryland in the hope of surmounting obstacles that continue to block the march of peace. The talks are also meant to bridge the gap that still exists between the Syrian and Israeli stands. This gap has prevented the peace process from reaching the objective it set out to achieve in Madrid. The peace process should have achieved this objective a long time before had it not been for Israel's deliberate creation of obstacles and attempts to push the peace process toward crooked ways and rugged territory. This made the peace process deviate from the shortest and safest way to achieve a true, just, and comprehensive peace.

The obstacles that prevent serious and quick progress in the peace process are still present. During the previous two rounds of negotiations, Israel did not announce the extent of its willingness to surmount those obstacles, despite the positive atmosphere that characterized the two sessions. Therefore, hopes for the success of the third round of talks depend on the new proposals the Israeli delegation will present in Maryland. These proposals should include Israel's willingness to pursue the path of peace, as charted by international legitimacy through Resolution 242 and 338. These two resolutions were summed up in the U.S. land-for-peace initiative. The question of land is still the stumbling block in the face of the peace process. Under no circumstances can peace be achieved through circumventing this obstacle. This obstacle must be removed, along with all its traces, so that the road to peace will be paved and doors will be opened for it. This way, peace will be achieved on solid, firm, and unshakable ground. This will allow peace to last and spread in the region and enable the people to devote their efforts and resources toward development and to replace the war machine with construction machines and means to create a better future for them and their future generations.

At any rate, we will not pass premature judgment. The next round will begin soon and we hope that the Israeli delegation will have what consolidates the belief that the new language used by Shim'on Peres is not mere words without context, but an expression of a position that emphasizes readiness to be committed to the essence of peace and a sincere desire to move from positive words to positive deeds that provide strong evidence of a desire to make peace with Syria. We do not believe that Peres is unaware of how to realize this objective or the means to open the door of peace with Syria, if he is still convinced that Syria is the key to peace in the region.

We expect, as do all those who are concerned for real peace, the next round to be objective and to deal seriously with the crux of the crisis in order not to waste time in bickering and maneuvering that are futile and which only lead to complications and deliberate deviation of the peace process away from the objective desired after its revival, and away from ending its stalemate.

The chance is now available to move with serious steps along the peace road. What bolsters the belief that this chance will not be wasted as happened with many chances in the past is the participation of the United States, with its weight, as a party and a full partner, in the coming negotiations. Most probably, due to its concern for the peace it calls for, and due to its commitment to the exchange of land for peace, the United States will not allow the process to stray from the right direction in view of the risks that may result from such situation, which would be difficult to control.

Undoubtedly, the United States is aware of its role as an honest partner, and its responsibility toward the resolutions that it approved along with other Security Council members, and called from its position as a big power that has a weight, for commitment to, and implementation of these resolutions.

Syrian Press: Israeli Commitment to Full Withdrawal Still Awaited

JN2301093196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In its editorial entitled "Syria's Position Embodies the Arabs' Supreme Interest," the newspaper AL-BA'TH discusses the consistent and pan-Arab policy Syria is pursuing with regard to the Arab cause and the peace process.

AL-BA'TH asserts that Syria has adopted a firm policy that first takes into account the pan-Arab interest and places it above Syria's regional interest. This policy also serves a strategy which aims to promote the nation and confront the challenges facing it, especially in the fields of economy, food security, and water resources.

AL-BA'TH says that the Arabs' rallying around Syria's position and their pursuit of the policy of cooperation and coordination in order to meet the peace requirements are two basic conditions for the aspired just and

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

comprehensive peace. Any violation of these two conditions, such as building bridges with Israel, establishing diplomatic relations with it, and exchanging economic interests with Israel before such peace is achieved will only undermine the interests and rights of the entire nation and encourage Israel to continue its intransigence and its refusal to announce a frank and public commitment to the principles and bases of the peace process.

Concluding, AL-BA'TH says: As the peace talks on the Syrian track resume in Washington tomorrow, and at a time when Syria emphasizes its commitment to a just and comprehensive peace and its refusal to sell out any Arab right or any inch of Arab territory, Damascus, through its positions and demands, is embodying the Arabs' legitimate aspirations not only for liberating their occupied territories and regaining their usurped rights but also for occupying an advanced position in the worlds of today and tomorrow alike.

In a commentary, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH recalls the Syrian constants in the peace talks and urges the United States to activate its role as a full partner in this process. It says: The growing clamor these days, which is preceding the new round of talks, as well as the differences in the Israeli positions on the early Israeli elections are no more than a new Israeli maneuver to obstruct talks.

AL-THAWRAH adds: The Israeli return to maneuvers is a discouraging start and a deliberate Israeli action designed to remove the optimism which began to surface at the Maryland talks. Observers are concerned about the possibility that these Israeli statements and allusion to the Israeli elections could be a plan designed to make the Maryland talks similar to the previous peace talks, especially since everyone has begun to sense a retreat in the sweet Israeli talk about peace.

AL-THAWRAH says that this requires the United States, which is the party that unleashed the peace initiative and prepared for the Maryland talks, to activate its role as a full partner in the talks in order to curb this Israeli deviation and pressure Israel into changing its position and into positively and practically joining the peace process before the new opportunity is wasted as a result of the Israeli rejection and maneuvers.

Concluding, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria—which fulfilled all of its commitments to the issue of real peace and gave an opportunity to render it a success, and which is now stressing its eagerness to continue the peace efforts—reemphasizes the adherence to its principled and consistent position on peace. Under no circumstances whatsoever can Syria accept a kind of peace that does not conform to its well-known constants.

In its editorial, the newspaper TISHRIN says that exaggerating the security obsessions will ultimately obstruct the peace process. It adds: Peace is first and foremost a will and a belief in the need to remove the region from the whirlpool of wars and conflicts, and it will be guaranteed by the international community.

TISHRIN continues: At a time when the security issue is preoccupying Israel, Syria is first interested in the Israeli forces' withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines, and is still awaiting a frank and public Israeli commitment in this regard. This is so because peace cannot be established without full Israeli withdrawal. Israeli officials are well aware that Syria's participation in the peace process is basic.

Concluding, TISHRIN says: The achievement of peace is first and foremost contingent upon a positive Israeli position on two conditions to which Syria constantly adheres; namely, full withdrawal and security equitability [al-takafu']. These two conditions are in complete harmony with the Security Council resolutions and the principles of international law and are characterized by objectivity. Discussing the security arrangements basically requires Israel's acknowledgement of full withdrawal. A public announcement by Israel on its intention to withdraw to the 4 June 1967 lines will open all doors to a real, just, and honorable peace in the Middle East which can withstand developments and events.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Afghanistan

Afghan Taleban Group Rejects Government Cease-Fire Offer

LD2301113996 Tehran IRNA in English 0817 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul, Jan. 23, IRNA — The council of Afghan religious leaders of three eastern Afghan provinces, Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kunar called on all Afghan warring factions to observe a cease-fire during the holy fasting month of Ramadan and try to settle their disputes through constructive talks, putting an end to the devastating internal war in Afghanistan.

The government of Borhanoddin Rabbani declared a unilateral cease-fire on Sunday [21 January] night at the threshold of Ramadan, to be observed during the whole month.

However, the Taleban group has rejected the offer of a cease-fire by the Afghan Government. The group's spokesman said Monday night that the group does not trust the government words, and that the offer is merely aimed at buying time for the government so that it can further reorganize its forces.

He added that Taleban will not commit themselves to a cease-fire and will continue their attacks on the government positions.

Expressing regret over Taleban's negative reaction, the government sources announced that the forces of Afghan Defense Ministry will strongly respond to any attack by Taleban.

In a separate development, the Supreme Council of Afghan Government called for a nationwide cease-fire and the reopening of roads to Kabul during the holy month of Ramadan.

Chaired by Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani, the council in a meeting on Monday asked all warring factions in Afghanistan to take basic and practical steps toward resolving the crisis and establishing peace and security in Afghanistan, according to Afghan president's press office.

At the gathering, the leader of Ettehad-e Eslami (Islamic Unity) party, 'Abdol Rasul Sayyaf, also a member of Supreme Council, gave a report of his visit to Jalalabad, the Nangarhar provincial capital, and his talks with the leaders of some Afghan groups and also Pakistani officials.

During his visit to Jalalabad, which lasted over three weeks, Sayyaf held separate meetings with the leaders of the two factions of Hezb-e Eslami (Islamic Party), Golboddin Hekmatyar and Maulvi Mohammad Yunes Khales, the leader of Harakat-e Enqelab-e Eslami (Movement for Islamic Revolution) party, Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi and the representatives of Taleban, but the details have not been disclosed.

Sayyaf will make a second visit to Jalalabad soon.

High State Council Calls Peace Delegation Talks 'Positive'

LD2201182796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A session of the High State Council [HSC] was held today under the chairmanship of esteemed Prof Borhanoddin Rabbani, president of the Islamic State of Afghanistan. The secretariat of the HSC reported to us that during today's session, the country's political and military situation was considered. Esteemed Abdorrasul Sayyaf, who had been to the east of the country for talks and meetings with jihadi leaders and national and social personalities of the country, presented a report to the session.

The HSC described the meetings as useful and positive for achieving a fundamental solution to problems and reaching understanding between all parties and called for the continuation of talks. The HSC also approved the 1st Dalw [21 January] statement of the Islamic State of Afghanistan and insisted that talks and understanding were reliable ways of resolving problems. The HSC expressed happiness at the continuation of talks to resolve problems and to end hostilities; the emergence of an atmosphere of trust; and the further consolidation of peace and security across the country. In the meantime, the HSC asked all involved sides to respond positively to the government statement and to refrain from continued fighting and the firing of rockets into residential areas; to reopen roads in order that goods needed by the people reach Kabul; and to avoid obstructing the movement of vehicles along the highways. The opposing sides should take practical steps toward the restoration of peace in the country by taking advantage of the present opportune atmosphere.

Radio on Afghan Ettehad Leader's Mission to Jalalabad

LD2201194496 (Clandestine) Radio Message of Freedom in Pashto to Afghanistan 0240 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Ustad Abdorrasul Sayyaf's mission has failed to produce its desired outcome. Reports reaching Radio Message of Freedom indicate that Ustad Sayyaf [Ettehad-e Eslami leader], who had been to Jalalabad accompanied by [Borders Minister] Chakari,

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Mazlomyar [position unknown], and Daneshyar [reportedly President Rabbani's representative in Jalalabad] to hold talks with leaders and jehadi commanders, returned to Kabul empty-handed. During his stay in Jalalabad he held talks with some commanders but did not achieve the desired outcome from his meetings.

Sayyaf has been to Jalalabad several times over the past months with different proposals, but every time he has returned to Kabul unsuccessful. However, recently Sayyaf arrived in Jalalabad with new plans and proposals and this time he met officers from Pakistani military intelligence, ISI, in Landi Kotal. It was planned that he would go to Pakistan at the end of his recent visit but the visit was cancelled for undisclosed reasons. It is said that Sayyaf is insisting on continuing his mission and has gone to Kabul to present a report on his work to the leaders of the Kabul administration and to seek new instructions. He is to return to Jalalabad soon. During his previous visit he failed to pursuade Mawlawi Yunus Khales [leader of Hezb-e Eslami (Khales) group] or Mawlawi Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi [leader of Harakat-e Enqelab-e Eslami] to accept the office of the state president.

Warlord Interviewed on Afghan Situation

MS2301100996 London INDEPENDENT in English 23 Jan 96 p 10

[Report on interview with Afghan warlord Gen. Abdul Rashid Dostam by Raymond Whitaker in London; date not given—all names as published]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The last time I had seen General Abdul Rashid Dostam was in April 1992 at Jabal os Sarraj, a town in Afghanistan where he had come to meet a fellow warlord, Ahmed Shah Massoud.

They looked improbable allies then — the slight, bearded Mr Massoud, a somewhat austere Islamist who had spent more than a decade pursuing a holy war against the Communist regime in Kabul, and Gen Dostam, bull-like in appearance as well as, by all accounts, his pleasures. He had precipitated President Najibullah's downfall by switching sides to the mujahedin, and had come through the Salang Pass with a column of armour to claim his reward. However menacing the reputation of the general and his wild Uzbek militia, it seemed a moment of hope for the mountainous nation.

Now, nearly four years later, Gen Dostam was in London, in the same week as Amnesty International described the period since April 1992 in Afghanistan as a "human rights catastrophe" of mass slaughter without end. Wearing an unfamiliar dark suit, he was seeking to encourage trade with his fiefdom in northern Afghanistan, particularly the possibility of gas exploration contracts.

Reminded of the Jabal os Sarraj meeting, he agreed that it was unlikely to be repeated soon: he and Mr Massoud are now bitter enemies. "I lent him those armoured vehicles to get through to Kabul, because Gulbuddin Hekmatyar (Afghanistan's most radical mujahedin leader) was blocking the way, but as soon as he was in the capital he forgot any agreements we had made," the general complained. "If they had been implemented, Kabul would not be in ruins now."

Others might argue that Kabul would have suffered more if Mr Massoud and his political chief, President Burhanuddin Rabbani, had not kept Gen Dostam's men at arm's length — they are known as gelim jam (carpet-takers), according to the Amnesty report, because of their propensity for looting.

On New Year's Day 1994 the warlord changed sides again. He and Mr Hekmatyar, who had been bombarding the capital for months in an attempt to seize power, launched a combined assault on New Year's Day 1994 which levelled more areas of Kabul and came within a couple of hundred yards of the presidential palace before Mr Massoud beat them back.

Since then Gen Dostam has kept mainly to his northern stronghold, based on Mazar e Sharif, the country's second largest city. He is reported to receive arms and money from his fellow Uzbeks in neighbouring Uzbekistan, has warplanes with which he occasionally bombs Kabul and is now even conducting his own foreign policy. He denies, however, that his movement "takes orders from others". Nor does he accept that his efforts to do deals on behalf of his part of the country could hasten the formal break-up of Afghanistan: "What we plan is for the good of the nation as a whole — I don't think any true Afghan would be against it."

Amnesty reports that Gen Dostam's followers attack undefended civilian targets, kill people out of hand and seize their possessions, commit rape and run unofficial detention centres where torture is routine. But so does every other faction in Afghanistan — despairing of persuading them to show any respect for human rights, the organisation has called on outside powers to exert more pressure for a peace settlement and to cut off the supply of arms.

Among countries to have provided weapons since the mujahedin takeover, Amnesty names India, Iran, Libya, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, which is reported to have sent Iraqi equipment confiscated after the Gulf war.

Fighting has subsided into a bloody stalemate in the past few weeks, and the UN special envoy, Mahmoud

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Mestiri, believes he has made progress towards setting up an interim council to take over power. A government spokesman said last week that Mr Rabbani was ready to step down if an agreed mechanism for the handover could be established. Gen Dostam said he was heading for talks in Pakistan that could endorse Mr Mestiri's efforts.

British diplomats dealing with the region met Gen Dostam last week. "Whatever one's views on him," said a source, "he is one of the main players in the country." And as the general himself pointed out, "People who called me unIslamic and a Communist, like Rabbani, now want to talk to me."

With Afghanistan's most effective military force at his command - - it was trained and equipped by the Soviet Union to serve as the former regime's shock troops — no peace deal can work without Gen Dostam. But even by the treacherous standards of Afghan power politics, he is not widely trusted. Those who do not harbour ethnic suspicions or consider him a Communist puppet see him as nothing but a mercenary.

Holding court in his London hotel suite, the warlord complained of a "campaign of disinformation", and protested: "We have never wanted any fighting, except when it was forced on us. Then we had to defend ourselves."

What about his sudden changes of allegiance? "I brought down a hated Communist leader for the good of the country. The next time we were simply defending ourselves. Some people call it warmongering — I deny that."

Bangladesh

Bangladesh Opposition Threatens 'Militant' Action Against 15 Feb Polls

BK2301060996 Hong Kong AFP in English 0547 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Dhaka, Jan 23 (AFP) — Bangladesh's opposition groups boycotting the February 15 general elections have ordered their workers to launch "coordinated militant" action to try to disrupt the polls, a spokesman said Tuesday [23 January].

A spokesman for a liaison committee of three major opposition groups said the order came following a meeting late Monday, soon after the announcement that Prime Minister Khaleda Zia would address the nation Tuesday.

Unidentified people hurled home-made bombs during the past two days in the capital Dhaka, including near the election commission complex and the government ministers' residential area, reports said. No injuries were reported.

Zia's speech, to be broadcast at 6:30 p.m. (1230 GMT), comes as Bangladesh's political crisis deepens over the polls and coincides with the end of a deadline set by the opposition to stop the February 15 elections.

Zia's press secretary, Mozammel Haq, told AFP "there is nothing dramatic (in her speech) and the prime minister will speak on election matters." He said it was to start the second phase of the election process to the 330-member national parliament.

On Sunday, major opposition groups which are boycotting the polls warned Zia to call off the polls by Tuesday, saying she would be held responsible for any violence should the vote go ahead. The government vowed that the process would go ahead to uphold the Constitution, which requires elections to be held 90 days from the time parliament was dissolved on November 24.

The opposition has been campaigning for the past 21 months for Zia's resignation and elections under a neutral caretaker government, but said it now plans a new thrust to oust Zia and disrupt what it called "farcical" polls.

Zia's ruling Bangladesh Nationalist Party government was considering imposing a state of emergency, but subject to developments until the end of January, the opposition AJKER KAGOJ daily reported Tuesday. No independent confirmation was available.

Newspapers reported that a threat by minor parties to withdraw from the hustings unless Zia resigned fizzled out following talks Monday with government leaders.

In a related development, the opposition has called for a general strike Wednesday in Sylhet, a tea-growing northeastern Bangladeshi district, to resist Zia's scheduled official start of polls campaign from the city, home to famous Moslem saints and Zia's traditional starting point when launching any campaign.

Bangladesh Minister: Government 'Pledge-Bound' To Hold Elections

BK2101163096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 1600 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Commerce and Information Minister M. Shamsul Islam has said the government has tried its best to bring all political parties in the election but, unfortunately, it did not materialize. He was exchanging views with the members of the Overseas Correspondents Association of Bangladesh, OCAB, in

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Dhaka today. The information minister said the Election Commission is holding elections as per Constitution and the government is pledge- bound to uphold the Constitution and democracy. Mr. Shamsul Islam said the Election Commission has announced the schedule and the polls will take place accordingly.

Bangladesh: Envoys Report Failure of Last Efforts To Solve Impasse

BK2001134796 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 17 Jan 96 p 1

[STAR Report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Last ditch diplomatic efforts to resolve the persisting political impasse apparently did not succeed yesterday due to "deep mistrust and rigid stands" of both the ruling party and the opposition, diplomatic sources said.

They were not optimistic about any solution to the 22-month-old political impasse, the sources added.

Envoys of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, Italy and Japan, led by US Ambassador David N. Merrill, called on BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] Chief and Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia and former leader of the Opposition in Parliament and Awami League Chief Sheikh Hasina separately yesterday evening to express their concern at the prevailing political situation.

They stressed the need for narrowing down the differences between the ruling party and the opposition, and participation of all political parties in the general elections, the sources said.

The diplomats spent more than an hour with each of the leaders, trying to persuade them to go for a face to face dialogue to solve the crisis.

Diplomatic sources said that the envoys did not carry any fresh proposal from either of the parties.

"Of course, we hoped for direct talks between the two sides," said a diplomat. "But for some reasons both sides have been very hesitant about it".

The diplomat, however, declined to be quoted.

Another envoy pointed out that the US ambassador have been trying to facilitate a meeting between the two sides but with no positive results as yet.

The diplomats coming out of Hasina's residence at 9.30 pm after the meeting with her declined to respond to newsmen's questions.

Briefing newsmen on the meeting, Awami League General Secretary Zillur Rahman said the prevailing political situation came up for discussion.

He said the diplomats attached special importance to participation of all political parties in the coming general election to make it meaningful.

Awami League leaders Abdus Samad Azad, Zillur Rahman, Sajeda Chowdhury, Amir Hossain Amu, Tofael Ahmed and S.A.M.S. Kibria were present in the meeting.

Asked about the possibility of a solution, BNP Secretary General and LGRD [Local Government and Rural Development] Minister Abdus Salam Talukdar said last night, "There would be no scope for a negotiated settlement after the deadline for filing nomination papers expired."

Talking to some newsmen at his Bailey Road official residence at 10 pm, Salam Talukdar said that his party was ready to go for the polls even without the participation of the major opposition parties.

Information and Commerce Minister M. Shamsul Islam was also present at that time.

"We must follow the Constitution and go ahead with the polls," Shamsul Islam said.

Nevertheless, efforts for further negotiations could be made provided the deadline for filing nomination papers, scheduled to expire at 5 this afternoon, is extended by the Election Commission [EC]. But the BNP is unwilling to request the EC for such a step and has left the matter to the commission, said a BNP negotiator.

When contacted, an EC official said that repeated shifting of the date was hampering their credibility and they were unlikely to defer the deadline unless they received any formal request from the major political parties.

Bangladesh Daily: Street Campaign To Unseat Government Planned

BK2001141696 Dhaka THE DAILY STAR in English 18 Jan 96 p 1

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The mainstream Opposition is now set for an intense street campaign to unseat the present government as the hope for a negotiated settlement of the persisting political crisis faded yesterday with the expiry of deadline for filing nomination papers for the ensuing parliamentary polls.

The crisis over the Opposition demand for a caretaker government stepped into a new phase with the Opposition's announcement of a 'no-deal'.

With no dialogue in sight, the Opposition Awami League [AL], Jatiya Party [JP] and Jamaat-e-Islami leaders yesterday spent most of their time reviewing the

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

situation and exchanging views on the future course of action.

The AL also held a separate meeting with the JP at the Dhanmondi residence of AL chief Sheikh Hasina.

In a joint statement late last night, the Opposition called upon the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) to abort the elections and "set an example by stepping down."

Briefing newsmen over a joint meeting of the three opposition parties, AL Organising Secretary Mohammad Nasim said that the Opposition would not only boycott the February 15 parliamentary elections, but also "resist the polls of a farce".

He said that the combined opposition no longer demanded polls. "Rather, from now on, our campaign will be directed towards the formation of a caretaker government with the fall of the ruling party," he added.

On behalf of the three parties, he called upon the EC [Election Commission] officials as well as the administration at the district and thana [subdistrict] levels to disassociate themselves from the election process.

He blamed that ruling party's efforts for holding "unilateral elections" was leading the nation to a confrontation.

"It is now a big question whether our hard-earned democracy will survive or not," Nasim cautioned, "Khaleda Zia will be responsible for any unbecoming situation."

The Opposition would never let democracy destroyed under a one- man rule, he added.

On the resignation of the CEC, Nasim said "We believe that the CEC would not only stop this election, but would also step down because of his respect to democracy and his exalted position. "

Dhaka Extends Cease-Fire in Chittagong Hill Districts

BK2001160696 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government and the Chittagong Hill Tracts People's Solidarity Council have decided to extend the term of cease-fire in the hill districts of Chittagong till 15 February.

This was stated in a press release issued by the Special Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Secretariat in Dhaka today. The term of the earlier cease-fire expired today.

India

Indian Congress-I Spokesman Denies 'Turmoil' in Party

BK2301014896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The leader of the Janata Dal parliamentary party, Mr. Sharad Yadav, has resigned from the Lok Sabha. In a letter to the Lok Sabha speaker, he requested that his resignation be accepted with immediate effect. Mr. Yadav's name figures among those who had allegedly received the hawala [illegal money transfer] funds.

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, says the party president will decide at a proper time when to convene the working committee meeting. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi today, he denied that there is any turmoil in the party because of recent happenings.

Indian Officials Resign Following Illegal Money Transfer Case

BK2301035796 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Janata Dal parliamentary party leader, Mr. Sharad Yadav, has resigned from the Lok Sabha. Mr. Yadav announced in New Delhi today that he has written to the Lok Sabha speaker requesting him to accept his resignation with immediate effect. Mr. Yadav, whose name figures among those who allegedly received hawala [illegal money transfer] funds, denied press reports that he has accepted any payoff from the hawala operator, S.K. Jain.

The leader of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in the Bihar assembly, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, is to step down. A special meeting of the party's election committee permitted him to do so in New Delhi today. However, the meeting declined to accept the Delhi chief minister, Mr. Madan Lal Khurana's offer to step down.

Talking to newsmen in Bhopal, the BJP leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, has reiterated his party's demand for state funding of elections. He said companies should be free to give donations to the parties of their liking. About the hawala case, he said at least some initiative have been taken against corruption.

The Congress-I spokesman, Mr. V.N. Gadgil, says the party president will decide at a proper time when to convene the CWC [Congress Working Committee] meeting. Talking to newspersons in New Delhi, he denied that there is any turmoil in the party because or recent happenings.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Charges Filed Against Former Indian Ministers in Money Scandal

BK2301130596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] has filed charge sheets against the former union ministers, Mr. V.C. Shukla, Mr. Madhavrao Scindia, and Dr. Bal Ram Jakhar, in the hawala [illegal money transfer] case. The charge sheets were filed in the designated court of Mr. V.B. Gupta in New Delhi today. The three had resigned as union ministers on Wednesday [17 January] after the CBI named them in the hawala case.

The Congress-I has denied the allegations of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, that the prime minister is involved in the hawala scandal. The party spokesman told newsmen in New Delhi today that the prime minister has not received any money either from Mr. Jain or anybody else.

The Janata Dal president, Mr. S.R. Bommai, categorically denied having received any hawala money. In a statement, he urged the president to intervene in the hawala inquiry case. He also demanded an inquiry into the issue.

West Bengal Minister Says Rao 'Kingpin' of Money Racket

BK2301092096 Delhi THE PIONEER in English 22 Jan 96 p 1

[Article by THE PIONEER state correspondent: "Rao Kingpin of Hawala Racket"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Jyoti Basu has accused Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao of being the kingpin in the hawala [illegal money transfer] racket. Saying that the Congress had become dangerous for the country, he demanded immediate elections to the Lok Sabha.

Addressing a party rally here on Sunday, Mr Basu said he had expected Mr Rao to at least refer to the sordid episode when he was in Calcutta last Wednesday to address a Youth Congress rally. "But he did not mention a word. And how could he have? After all he is the chief of corruption."

Instead, he told the people a bundle of "lies" about the performance of the Left Front Government, totally oblivious of the innumerable scandals, from Bofors to the securities scam to the sugar rip-off that have rocked the Congress Government during the last five years.

Mr Basu said Mr Rao had been trying to take the credit of exposing the corrupt politicians in the hawala case. But this is far from the truth. Mr Rao and his party have no credit. In fact Mr Rao is at the centre stage of this racket, he alleged.

Mr Basu accused the Congress of indulging in criminalisation of politics and said what the party had been doing amounted to treachery with the country.

Mr Basu was of the view that the Prime Minister's charges were prompted by "his fear of losing the coming elections and he has been crying hoarse since he has been highly discredited for his Government's nonperformance on all fronts."

Mr Basu said the Prime Minister's allegation that the State Government had not only wasted Central funds, but also taken credit for most of the centrally sponsored schemes was fallacious. In fact, it is the Centre which has often withheld its share of funding.

Even the responsibility of contributing 30 per cent to the State Plan wasn't fulfilled on occasions. In any case, the money which Mr Rao claimed was his belonged to the tax payers, not him, with even the 30 per cent grant being a debt. "But what does one do when an educated leader tells such lies under the open sky."

The anti-West Bengal bias was obvious even in the matter of loans entrepreneurs. Whereas, the nationalised banks advanced 80 per cent of the total investment to entrepreneurs in other States, those aspiring to set up an industry in West Bengal were given only 50 per cent of the cost. Again, only Rs [rupees] 16 crore of the total Rs 40 crore in the megacity project had so far been received from the Centre.

West Bengal leads in rice output, and small savings, but Mr Rao conveniently forgot all these achievements, Mr Basu complained. "I know if I ask him why he said such bad things about the State Government, he will tell me that when I talk to you, it is as Prime Minister, but when I address a meeting, it is as a politician."

Indian Minister Views Visit by Brazilian President, Expectations

PY2301025396 Madrid EFE in Spanish 1848 GMT 22 Jan 96

[By Isabel Calleja]

[FBIS Translated Text] New Delhi, 22 Jan (EFE) — The Indian Government will ask Brazilian President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to support at international forums the Indian bid for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

In an interview with EFE, Indian Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid said that New Delhi will take advan-

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

tage of this opportunity to ask for the support of Brazil, "as a special friend."

"I would like the Indian prime minister to report the visitor's answer during the bilateral meeting," Khurshid said in connection with an official meeting that the Brazilian president will hold with Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao during his stay in New Delhi.

Khurshid refused to say whether the Indian Government and Cardoso will address the exploitation by India and Brazil of the thorium reserves for production of nuclear fuel, although he hinted that the subject might be raised during the debate.

The Indian foreign minister said the Brazilian president's visit will have historical significance. Cardoso will arrive in New Delhi on 22 January to attend, as a guest of honor, the parade marking the Day of the Republic on 26 January.

"He will open a new stage in the history of our relations," Khurshid said, emphasizing that India and Brazil have similar views and priorities on several international issues.

"Brazil and India have a great responsibility in the world, in the effort to reform the Security Council and world financial institutions, and we can support each other," Khurshid said.

The physical distance, Khurshid went on, was an obstacle for Indian-Brazilian relations, but after South Africa appeared in the international arena, direct flights began joining Brazil and India.

The Indian objectives, the minister said, are the promotion of commercial relations and tourism. In 1991, the Indian Government started revolutionary economic reforms, turning this country into an attractive market for foreign investment.

In the opinion of Khurshid, Brazil can even serve as a bridge for India to reach the other Latin American countries. He said, however, that this "proposal entails a huge responsibility."

"We are very optimistic about the future of commercial relations" between the two countries, Khurshid said, adding that "the best way to promote them is through business in partnership."

The Indian press reflected interest in the Brazilian president's visit, with reports from special correspondents sent to Brazil by some of the more prestigious Indian newspapers, like TIMES OF INDIA and THE HINDU [names of newspapers in English].

During his stay in the Indian capital, Cardoso will meet with Indian President Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice President K. R. Narayanan, Prime Minister Rao, and Foreign Minister Khurshid.

Cardoso will also visit Bombay, the capital of the western state of Maharastra, where he will meet with the chief minister, entrepreneurs, and industrialists. Before returning home, Cardoso will deliver a speech at the "India International Center" [name of institution in English].

Japan To Provide India Loan for Infrastructure

BK2301035596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Japan has agreed to provide a loan of $300 million to India for infrastructure development. It will be utilized to finance projects in power, telecommunication, transportation, oil refining, steel, and petrochemical sectors. An agreement to this effect was signed by the governor of the Export Import Bank of Japan, Mr. H. Yasuda, and the chairman and managing director of Industrial Development Bank of India, Mr. S.H. Khan, in Mumbai [Bombay] today.

Indian Advanced Light Helicopter Makes Maiden Flight

BK2301025996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1230 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Advanced Light Helicopter, ALH-4, indigenously designed and built for the Indian Navy made its maiden flight in Bangalore today. The chief of the naval staff, Admiral V.S. Shekhawat, accompanied by senior naval commanders witnessed the inaugural flight. The helicopter was designed by the public sector Hindustan Aeronautics — the country's premier aircraft manufacturing unit.

Details on Indian Advanced Helicopter Prototype for Navy

BK2301051596 Delhi Doordarshan Television Network in English 1530 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The fourth and the last of the Advanced Light Helicopter [ALH] variant, the naval prototype, successfully flew on its inaugural flight at Bangalore this afternoon. This is a significant landmark in the country's naval aviation. The light helicopter has been designed and developed indigenously to meet the need of the armed forces. Our correspondent Gayatri Chandrashekhar reports:

[Begin Chandrashekhar recording] Marking an important step in indigenous naval aviation, ALH naval prototype successfully flew in Bangalore. It demonstrated

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

several maneuvers such as spot turns, sideward and (?revert) flights and turns. This helicopter has retractable tricycle undercarriage instead of kits seen in the earlier advanced late helicopters. It has capacity for higher payloads; its main rotor blade can be folded for storage on ship deck. Speaking at the function, Admiral V.S. Shekhawat, chief of naval staff, said that the ALH would prove successful in naval operation against underwater and surface vessels and for early warning. Helicopters for different naval operations can be derived from the ALH naval prototype, he added. Mr. R.N. Sharma, chairman of HAL [Hindustan Aeronautics Limited], said that a limited series production for 10 advanced (?make) helicopters is already under way; two of these will be for the Navy. [end recording]

Iran

Six Iranians on Trial for Setting Up Network To Oust Regime

NC2201142096 Paris AFP in English 1348 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Report by Kianouche Dorranie — names as received]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 22 (AFP)—Six Iranians including a former Jew went on public trial at a revolutionary court on Monday [22 January] accused of setting up a large spy network which plotted to overthrow Iran's Islamic regime.

It was the first open trial to be staged here for alleged spies.

The six, all former military officers or businessmen, are accused of forming a network during the 1980-1988 war against Iraq to defraud the country's nationalized banking system, traffic arms and spy for Israel and the United States.

They are also accused of working to restore Iran's imperial regime, toppled in the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The suspects are Hedayatollah Zendehdel, a Jewish businessman who converted to Islam, Freidun Abu-Zia, an interpreter, Abdolreza Yazdanshenas, former air force officer, Ali Sadafian, former member of the imperial guard, Abdolghassem Majd-Abkani, an alleged associate of the late shah, and businessman Abdolghafur Sartipi.

Under a law existing in Iran since the revolution, the six, arrested six years ago, could face the death penalty.

According to the court, some 150 people were directly or indirectly involved with the network with 110 of them having already arrested and questioned in the case.

Based on the charges read for two hours at the beginning of the trial, the six, introduced as the "core" of the ring, were in contact with "anti-revolutionary groups," notably associates of the former royal family.

They sought to "topple" the regime by "disrupting the country's economic life," or "through armed action if the first method failed."

The men are also accused of having collected classified military information and forwarding them to foreign countries, notably the United States.

They also tried to smuggle in arms through the southern port of Chah Bahar, on the Gulf of Oman, and provide them to "anti- revolutionaries" for armed action against the government.

The six also tried to bribe and introduce prostitutes to officials and bank employees to obtain "major loans under fictitious names."

They were also accused of adultery, consuming alcoholic drinks and using opium, and of falsifying documents to smuggle out some 15 Iranian Moslem and jews with links with Israel.

Zendehdel, a 56-year-old engineer, was presented as the brain behind the ring and the main culprit.

Summoned to the witness stand, he told judge Gholamhussein Rahbarpur that he accepted the charges and confessed to having led the network's "financial division."

Dressed in a prison outfit and showing no sign of nervousness, Zendehdel provided a lengthy explanation of illegal acts committed by various members of his group.

He acknowledged he had never shared any "sentiments" with Iran's Islamic regime and he had only converted to Islam to "better further his interests." He had no intention of defending himself, the suspect said.

The court was adjourned after three hours and the trial will resume next Monday to allow other suspects to defend themselves.

Iran Denies Involvement in Tajik Mufti's Death

LD2301132696 Tehran IRNA in English 1108 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, 23rd January — A spokesman of the Foreign Ministry of the Islamic Republic of Iran has expressed regret over the comments made by the Tajik president, quoted by newspapers, who had called Iran as a training ground for terroristic activities.

Mahmud Mohammadi said: The Islamic Republic of Iran's peaceful efforts to mediate between the Tajik

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

president and opponents, which resulted in a cease-fire, holding of elections and continuation of talks, manifest the fact that we support the establishment of national reconciliation, peace and stability in Tajikistan only through peaceful methods and negotiations.

The Foreign Ministry's spokesman called the assassination of Mufti Fathullo Sharifzoda as a blind action, and added: As the action isn't in the interest of national reconciliation, peace and stability in Tajikistan [it] could not be attributed to the opponents and [the action] is not acceptable to us.

Mr Mohammadi said it is not in the interest of regional peace and security if the Tajik president relies on suspicious news sources and information. He added: We hope that the Tajik Government will take more serious and sincere steps towards national reconciliation.

Mr Mohammadi said that they [the Tajik authorities] knew that the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran, more than any other country, had made efforts towards the establishment of a cease-fire , and has had valuable successes.

Iran Said Not Interfering in Bahrain's Internal Affairs

LD2201135596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 22 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Bahraini newspapers on Sunday implicitly implicated Iran in staging demonstrations in the country. According to an AFP report, AL-AYYAM daily in its Sunday's edition wrote: Deceived elements have confessed to having orders from the sacred Iranian city of Qom to carry out sabotage in public Areas.

Such allegations by Bahraini press indicate that official papers of the country ascribed the demonstrations staged by opposition groups to other countries in order to justify the government's policies adopted in the face of the demonstrators. But it should be said the Bahraini press is in fact going astray.

The fact of the matter is that Bahraini adversaries desire to facelift the country's parliament and see reforms pledged by the country's amir be fulfilled. This is not an issue which could be overlooked by accusing other countries of involvement in the internal affairs of the country.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, based on cordial and brotherly policy it has in all regional countries, is under no circumstance willing to interfere in the country's internal affairs. And in fact Bahraini press instead of levelling divisive allegations on Iran should get to the core of existing problems. Bahrain's measure will bear no fruit but create an atmosphere of distress among regional states.

What seems to be a conundrum to political analysts is: Why has Bahrain's press failed to show any reaction to British government , which is given shelter to its opposition leaders, in order to invest in the country's future and is constantly interfered covertly or overtly in Bahrain's affairs [as heard]. Has the Bahraini security official, who himself is British, had no role in quieting the country's press?

Informed observers say the British government through (?playing out) its worn-out policies of sheltering opposers in Persian Gulf shaykhdoms intends to, on the one hand, win the necessary concessions from the Bahraini government like granting facilities to its opposers, and on the other in case the opposers failed to take over the reins of power, ask for for tributes for its so-called aid during the country's campaign. [as heard]

It seems far from the likely that Bahraini press is unaware of this double edged policy. But is it that it deflects public a minds [as heard] from the fact in the country by bring up distracting issues? It should be said that the Islamic Republic of Iran fully understand that Iran's implication in organizing the country's opposers by the country's press has mostly taken place under the sway of elements who were not in the least interested to witness the consolidation of the two countries' ties. It is for this very reason that Iran has constantly been stressing the importance of an atmosphere of friendship and understanding between regional states.

Iranian Ambassador on Nuclear Weapons, Ties to Russia

NC2201121196 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 11 Jan 96 pp 1, 9

[Interview with Iranian Ambassador to Germany Seyyed Hoseyn Musavian by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [ABRAR] In view of the fact that the European Union has now adopted a more serious face as a political organization, how do you assess Iran's relations with this Union and with the countries in it, especially after officials of three European countries—Germany, Holland, and France—canceled the planned meetings with Iranian officials in protest of Iran's stands?

[Musavian] Germany did not cancel any meetings with Iranian officials until today.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

[ABRAR] We are speaking about Dr. Velayati's visit to Germany where he was to attend the conference on Islam and Christianity.

[Musavian] The German Bundestag reached a decision on this. But the German Government did not implement it and did not postpone the conference. Iran's relations with Europe should not be regarded individually in my opinion. If we want to analyze things realistically and be sincere in our assessment, we should accept that Iran's relations with Europe are not subject to bilateral factors. Our problems and America cannot affect our relations with Europe. The Middle East peace process cannot affect Iranian- European relations either. Currently, our relations with Europe are normal and we do not have major problems with these countries. If we compare the progress of our relations with European countries, we will see that these relations have improved when compared with past years. We should assess our future relations with Europe in comparison to important international problems because the outcomes of many of these problems, such as the peace process, are unclear.

Iran's relations with Europe are not merely bilateral relations. We believe that we can have better relations than we already have with Europe within a logical and principled framework based on international norms and standards. The condition is that we can agree on a formula of understanding with Europe about the misgivings that exist between Iran and the West. For example, the Americans have circulated extensive propaganda that we have nuclear arms. But we know very well that we do not have such arms.

Therefore, the framework used for discussions between Iran and Europe should be one which builds confidence and overcomes misunderstandings on nuclear arms and chemical and biological weapons. And this framework can form the basis for cooperation between Iran and Europe to struggle against advanced weaponry.

Of course, this cooperation should be mutual. While we condemn the existence of nuclear and chemical weapons, the truth is that since World War II, we have been the biggest victim of chemical weapons. And it was the Westerners who provided Iraq with this chemical technology that led to the death or maiming of thousands of human beings and inflicted heavy damage on us. In other words, to the same extent that they accuse us, we are truly worried about the West's sale of mass murder weapons to the region. Thus, the concern is mutual. We should be able to find a way to create trust between Iran and Europe. We may not be able to reach an understanding on all the misgivings, misunderstandings, and differences—and we probably can't because if we want to assess things realistically, our major problem with the West is not the problem of America and the Middle East peace process, but the issue of a religious government. It is very difficult for the West to see that a religious government on the basis of Islamic values has been able to succeed in one part of the world and to become a pattern for other Islamic countries. This is one of our biggest problems with the West. The West does not support our Islamic values and we are not prepared to accept the imposition of Western cultural values on us.

We should accept that our major problem is a problem of values. But is there any reason to create tension without any reason or, if there are misgivings, not to try to find solutions? No. I believe that for a considerable share of the misgivings that exist between Iran and the West, including Europe, good confidence-building formulas can be found and should definitely be mutual. They accuse us of "terrorism" and of supporting terrorism. We believe that those who have accepted the responsibility for tens of thousands of assassinations in Iran have been granted asylum in their countries and are being protected by them. Therefore, we should think about and work toward mutual efforts with the Europeans on fighting terrorism. I believe that if we are able to make this our foundation—that is, if we are able to achieve a framework with the Europeans within which we can solve misgivings, misunderstandings, and differences through peaceful means as much as possible and to find a way for mutual trust—we can have better relations than the one we have with the Europeans today.

[ABRAR] How significant is Iran for the European Union? In other words, how significant is Iran in the European Union's strategic assessment of world problems and of regional problems in the Middle East?

[Musavian] We should not underestimate Iran. We should also not think that the significance of the world is on one side and the significance of Iran on the other! We sometimes hear so much said about Iran's significance as though the entire world is placed on one side of the scale and Iran on the other. But this is not true. Iran does have special characteristics which the foreigners cannot deny. And, God forbid, we ourselves should not underestimate them. There is no doubt about Iran's strategic significance. The significance of the Persian Gulf is clear. The significance of the Caspian Sea is clear. Iran's population potentials [are clear] and the type of people we have are rare. This is why Iran is the center for the world's Islamic revival. I think that this is more important than Iran's strategic position. Europe considers us to be an important factor in the region, both economically, politically, and culturally. If we say that we are the most important factor, we are exaggerating. But we are an important factor. Europe

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

is also an important factor for us. In other words, we accept the fact that currently and for the past few decades our main partner in industry and technology is and has been Europe. Apart from technology and the economy, Europe also has something to say in the scientific and cultural fields and in the academic field, frankly speaking, it is of a high level. Therefore, we do not negate Europe's significance, nor does Europe negate Iran's significance. If someone in a European country tries to negate this, it is for propaganda reasons. Otherwise, they know deep inside how significant Iran is.

[ABRAR] One problem that most of the critics of Iranian-European relations refer to is that Iran's significance for Europe has decreased because of the economic problems Iran is facing. In other words, previously maybe Europe [as published] was an economic factor, but this position has now weakened. You also referred to the issue of values which is very true. In view of the fact that the Scandinavian countries have become members of the European Union and, generally speaking, these countries have specific stances, don't you think that in the future this will create some problems for Iran?

[Musavian] If you want my assessment, I believe that Iran's political and cultural importance are more significant for Europe than its economic importance. Analysts think that when our dollar situation was good, we made purchases and we were important and that now that we are not able to purchase so much, we are not important anymore. I do not believe that the drop in our purchases is partially because we do not have any money or we have lower incomes and should repay loans, but because we have truly become self-sufficient and powerful. If previously we implemented a power plant project with half a billion DM, today we implement a similar project with 100.2 million DM. The same applies to petrochemical projects. Energy needs in a major part of our large-scale infrastructure projects have dropped to one-tenth. Of course, the Westerners are also aware of this. Thus, we should not call this a drop in Iran's economic capacity but should regard it as an improvement.

A country whose industrial potential has increased to such an extent should receive a higher mark as an economic partner. They also know that the problems caused by the drop in oil prices and because of past loans are temporary problems and will last only two or three years. This is clear to them. We were one of the most credit-worthy countries in the world and now, since the beginning of 1373 [year beginning 21 March 1994] with the interruption in repayments for a couple of years, Europe confesses that the Iranian Central Bank's repayments are very much like they were in the past. But I consider the economic factor to be a third factor, and I believe that the Europeans are aware of the fact that Iran's economy has improved. And finally, the disintegration of the Soviet Union has created a series of important economic opportunities in the north of Iran and in the Caspian Sea. The developments and the crises that we have in the region—like Afghanistan, Iraq, Tajikistan, and Karabakh—will create new economic factors in the future. The economic importance of the Persian Gulf and of Iran in the Persian Gulf cannot be ignored. Of course, I stress that we always compare excessiveness and waste. But frankly speaking, when I examine most of the analyses at home, I see that it is usually excessiveness and not waste that we are talking about. We should not consider Iran's economic weight as so significant and so fundamental that Europe will maintain its relations with us at any cost and under any conditions. Nor should we assume that Europe's economic importance is so great that we will be willing to sacrifice everything under any circumstances for our economic relations with it. This is not so.

[ABRAR] Do we have other economic partners, too?

[Musavian] Yes. We have other economic partners. Europe is very interested in economic cooperation with us. But this does not mean we can say that Europe has to have economic cooperation with Iran under any circumstances and that it has no other plans. This is not correct.

[ABRAR] Can we say that Iran's political significance is due to the fact that because of the political rifts in the Middle East today, the majority of the countries in this region—such as the Persian Gulf shaykhdoms or the Arab shaykhdoms—are under American influence or have independent relations with America? And can we say that this deprives Europe of a series of economic interests and that this is why it is trying to preserve its good political relations with countries like Iran. Algeria, and Iraq—countries that do not have good relations with America and which can, at the same time, form an area for European influence?

[Musavian] No, because Europe's share in the Middle Eastern economy is more than America's share. What you are talking about is military sales... [ellipsis as published]

[ABRAR] Of course, I am speaking about the oil resources—that is, about the influence that America has on oil resources.

[Musavian] You should separate one from the other. Saying that the Arab and Islamic countries and the Middle Eastern countries have handed everything over

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

to America and that Europe has no share is not correct. If we add up the figures, we see that the Europeans' exports to the Middle East, if not more than the Americans', is definitely the same. But, at any rate, the Europeans' share in the Middle Eastern economy is definitely more.

[ABRAR] One thing that does exist, and which I accept, is that Europe and even Japan are afraid that in the future—that is, in the 21st century—those countries that have good relations with America will try to tie these countries to their own bandwagon. This will create a new oil shock as far as prices are concerned and will inflict a blow to the economies of the European Union and Japan.

[Musavian] No. I would like to discuss this point. First let us clarify the share of the economy and exports, and the topic of the extent of America's and Europe's control or influence of the Middle East's strategic oil resources. Of course, American influence is much greater, and the Europeans have always worried and will continue to worry that oil prices may change greatly in the future.

[ABRAR] Another problem for Iran's relations with the West, including America, is relations with Russia. Don't you think that in view of the developments in Russia—that is, the possibility of others with anti-Western feelings coming to power—that Russia will start to expand its past stands and that the West will want to improve and expand its relations with Iran so that it can use Iran and a number of neighboring countries to confront Russia? Of course, I am speaking about the distant future, and not now.

[Musavian] The extent of sensitivity that Europe and America feel toward Tehran-Moscow relations differs. The Americans are extremely sensitive and concerned. The Europeans feel less sensitivity and concern than the Americans. But this does not mean that the Europeans have no concerns at all. This is why relations between Iran and Russia are of such a delicate and sensitive nature. And we should be careful so that inopportune concerns about Iranian-Russian relations are not spread to the West in general. Europe does not oppose Iran's relations with Russia; it truly concurs. But if they feel that Iran and Russia are, say, trying to manufacture the atomic bomb in Iran, their tentacles will become extremely sensitive and this will have a negative impact on Iranian-European relations, let alone how America will feel. And since in our relations with Russia we are not engaged in any type of activity that concerns the building of nuclear arms and our nuclear cooperation is completely peaceful and within the framework of international conventions and the treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction, we have extremely sound foundations that we can rely on to ease the concerns that are primarily felt by the Americans, and the Europeans and the other Western countries, about Tehran-Moscow relations. We should definitely do this. We should show them that we do not have any problems in establishing balanced relations with Europe, China, Russia, and India. These relations depend on their behavior. The more they try to bother us, naturally the more we will establish relations with countries that show goodwill toward us.

[ABRAR] If you will allow me, I would like to speak about Iranian-German relations. In my questions I referred to the cancellation of a conference on Islam and Christianity. How do you think Iranian-German relations will be in the future? It could be said that these relations have set an example for other European countries. Do you think that in view of the various parties represented in the Bundestag, Iranian-German relations may be interrupted?

[Musavian] If I said that Iranian-German relations were not vulnerable, I would be lying. If I said that America, Israel, and the World Council of Jews are not trying, day and night, to inflict blows against these relations, I would be lying. The truth is that Iran's relations with any country can be vulnerable. The sensitivies in our relations with Europe are a little bit greater. Our relations with China are much easier than our relations with Europe because Europe constitutes a large part of the West. The difficulties of Iran's Islamic Revolution have been with the West. During the past few years, our relations have been good on the whole. The government has been satisfied with these relations. Political visits; parliamentary visits; Germany's stands at the G-7 conferences vis-a-vis the Americans; Germany's efforts and stands in Europe to bring the European Union and Iran closer; the Germans' initiative to delay the repayment of Iran's debts, in extending state insurance, and in extending new credits for the Second Plan; and even the problem that recently arose in the Bundestag and the German Government's refusal to carry out the Bundestag's decision are all things that cannot be readily found in most countries. We do not see a parliament approving a decision with a majority of votes and the government refusing to obey or to cancel the visit by 300 guests for the sake of one. This shows that Bonn's political determination to preserve its existing relations with Iran is strong. Again, if I want to be sincere in my assessment, I should say that I am not pessimistic about the future of Iranian-German relations.

I feel that we can maintain our current good relations with Germany. But we see how the Americans and

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Israelis are trying to fan the flames of the conditions that exist in the world today. The Americans have shown that with their recent decision against us, they are seriously trying to inflict blows against us. In order to insure our relations with Europe, we should start more serious negotiations in removing misunderstandings and in decreasing the tension between Iran and the West. Europe can play the role of a good middleman in these efforts for detente. And the Europeans are truly not interested to see tension in relations between Iran and the West—and especially a tension that cannot be tolerated. They have accepted a certain degree of tension because of the first factor—that is, the religious government in our country—because, after all, they know that this religious government has an extraordinarily strong popular backing and cannot be altered so easily. Even if the Americans intend to approve another decision, they will still be unable to change the government, which is backed by the people.

[ABRAR] If America's recent decision—that is, the decision to increase sanctions—goes through the appropriate legal phases and Clinton approves it, will it be able to affect Iranian-German relations in view of the fact that Germany is one of Iran's major trade partners?

[Musavian] If I said that it will have no impact, I would be wrong. The steps the Americans are taking will affect Iran's relations with Europe. But they will not be determining factors.

[ABRAR] Iranian officials have always called on Iranian experts living abroad to return to the country. Some of them have returned. What impact has this call had on the Iranian experts living in Germany?

[Musavian] During the 4-5 years that I have been assigned to Germany, I have come to realize the great opportunities that exist in Iranian societies in Europe and in Germany as far as capital—scientific capital, expertise, and money—are concerned. I truly believe that until today favorable use has not been made of these assets. But the process that has started is a positive and constructive one.

We should accept the fact that Iranians abroad are living under a horrific propaganda empire that is churning out negative propaganda on Iran every second. We need some time to allow these Iranians to meet our officials, to learn about their intentions, and to realize that the West's propaganda is false. The process is a positive one. During the past few years alone we have had 10 convoys of Iranian experts, each convoy comprising 50 to 200 people, returning to Iran. We know a good number of Iranian engineers, doctors, merchants, and businessmen who were living in Iran and who have returned during the past three to four years. But in order to make the best and most comprehensive use of all these opportunities both in Germany and in other countries, I think that we should work a little bit harder at home and take some regulations, factors, and elements into consideration.

[ABRAR] What about investment?

[Musavian] By investment I do not mean only money.

[ABRAR] There is also expertise.

[Musavian] Yes. I truly attach more importance to the expertise that a physics, chemistry, or mathematics professor has than to the money invested by a businessman. More serious planning should be done inside the country in order to gain the confidence of Iranians living abroad and we should be more active outside the country, too.

[ABRAR] We have had two or three emigration waves to the West and, for example, to Germany. What efforts have been made to bring about these people's return and have these efforts been successful?

[Musavian] The figures that we have in Germany show that since the war ended, that is, in 1988, the number of Iranians who have sought refuge in Germany has dropped. The Europeans also have more restrictions on accepting refugees now. Therefore, this is within the context of the same process that I have referred to and is progressing in a positive manner.

[ABRAR] My other question is about the positive stand that the Germans took during the war with Iran and the fact that the then Foreign Minister Genscher was among the first politicians in the world to overtly identify Iraq as the aggressor. As one of our successul ambassadors abroad, can you please tell us where we stand economically and politically with Germany in comparison with our other partners?

[Musavian] Since four years ago, we have been witnessing a drop in German exports to Iran. In other words, if their exports were previously 8 billion [currency not specified], in 1995 this figure was 3 billion. We have had a drop in our economic relations, while economic relations have increased with some other European countries. But we have had an increase in other aspects—political aspects. The Germans' support for relations with Iran have become more open and tangible, both in international conferences and with America, as well as in our relations with Europe. Today we can almost say that the Americans and the Israelis are not as sensitive about Iran's relations with other countries—at least in the West— as they are about its ties with Germany. During the past three years we have stated this on several occasions to the head of the American Administration, the secretary of state, and the Zionist

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

head of state and foreign minister. The Germans regard economic relations with Iran as truly the sole and most major factor. The Germans consider the weight that Iran carries in the world of Islam, and in Persian Gulf and Middle East peace, stability, and security to be more important than economic relations with us. If we want to be realistic in our analysis of economic relations, we have had a reduction in economic relations. On the one hand, we expected the Germans to delay the repayment of our loans and they took the initiative on this, this was a great political risk for them. On the other hand, when the Second Plan started all the insurance companies refused to extend insurance to us. Again we expected them to make insurance available to us. Even in economic relations, the political dimensions were much more than the economic dimensions.

Iran's economic potential is also clear for them. In other words, the traditional-economic relations we have with Germany are clear. How much Iran's economic future is worth to Germany's economic relations is also clear and even undeniable.

[ABRAR] What is your opinion of the accusations made by some German newspapers about the information minister's involvement in the assassination of members of the Democratic Party of Kordestan in Berlin?

[Musavian] When Germany's public prosecutor handed over his bill of indictment to the Berlin court in 1372 [1993], this bill clearly stated that the possibility of the Iranian Government's involvement should be examined. This was signed by the general prosecutor and was reported around the world by all the news agencies. For about three years now the Berlin court has been studying this case, and a hearing is held every two to three weeks. Since then, first of all, no new issue has been raised by Germany's judicial and political officials. Second, no new incidents have taken place. Whatever is being said about issuing a warrant for Mr. Fallahian's arrest is completely baseless. Neither the German public prosecutor nor the court have issued a verdict against him and no court official has stated anything to any newspaper or magazine about a possible verdict. No political or judicial authority has made any comments on this. Only FOCUS magazine wrote that the general prosecutor is examining the case on the Iranian Information Ministry's involvement and that if this is proven, he will issue an arrest warrant. This was the allegation made by FOCUS and it is worthless.

Russian Envoy: Tehran, Moscow Not Rivals in CIS States

LD2301094096 Tehran IRNA in English 0723 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 23, IRNA — Russian Ambassador to Tehran Sergey Tertyakev refuted claims by certain countries that Tehran and Moscow are rivals in the newly independent republics of the former Soviet Union, the English daily 'IRAN NEWS' reported on Tuesday.

In an interview the Russian diplomat told the paper that one proof of the two countries' collaboration is Russia's participation in regional groupings such as the Caspian Sea cooperation organization, on the recommendation of the Islamic Republic.

Acknowledging that Iran and Russia have military and technical collaboration, which started with the visit to Moscow of President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani in 1989, he reiterated his country's commitment to all its undertakings with and promises to Iran.

He underlined the importance of Moscow's political will and firm resolve to complete the Bushehr nuclear power plant, adding that delays are not expected as financial problems have already been resolved.

Predicting bright prospects for economic ties between the two countries, Iranian and Russian delegations would soon be finalizing agreements signed by the two countries, he said, adding that Iranian Minister of Economic and Financial Affairs Morteza Mohammad-Khan is set to visit Moscow in April.

Iran and Russia are currently reviewing 13 agreements in various fields including culture, commerce, law, security, military crisis prevention and the promotion of investments. A series of important contracts involving the private sectors of the two countries are also expected to be signed.

On foreign policy matters, he said Iran and Russia oppose any foreign intervention in the region and avoid being influenced by other countries over their international relations.

Despite U.S. attempts to mar Tehran-Moscow ties in recent years, he emphasized that relations would continue to expand in the coming years.

Velayati Opens Meeting With Turkmen, Armenian Counterparts

LD2001164396 Tehran IRNA in English 1608 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 20, IRNA — Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati said here on

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Saturday [20 January] the tripartite cooperation among Iran, Central Asia and Caucasus would be a great stride towards developing relations of those countries with other parts including the Persian Gulf region.

Speaking in the opening ceremony of the fourth tripartite meeting with his Turkmen and Armenian counterparts Boris Shikhmuradov and Vahan Papazyan, Velayati said that Iran believes that promotion of regional cooperation is the only way to guarantee peace and security in the region. He said for this purpose Iran is determined to build up bilateral, trilateral and multi-lateral relations with the states in the Central Asia and Caucasus.

Iran has given priority to those development projects inside the country which are directly linked with the development of the regional countries. For instance, he said, Iran has established border crossings and customs offices in border areas such as Bajgiran, Lotfabad and Meghri, developed transport network such as Bafq-Bandar-e 'Abbas and Mashhad-Sarakhs railroads, created free trade zones, increased the capacity of southern and northern ports and formulated appropriate regulations to facilitate cooperation with the regional countries.

Velayati pointed to the independence of the republics in the Central Asia and Caucasus and said recognition of the independence of those states, establishment of trade relations and signing of political, economic and cultural agreements with them by Iran indicated the latter's attitude towards regional cooperation. Velayati said in the meantime that Iran is continuing its peace efforts to help resolve the crises in the region.

The Iranian foreign minister said to the two-day ministerial meeting the Islamic Republic of Iran sticking to the principles of its diplomacy respects the good neighbourly relations and is planning to promote cooperation with other regional countries.

Velayati hoped that the fourth meeting of foreign ministers of Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia would be effective in attaining the important objectives of trilateral cooperation.

The experts of Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia began studying ways of boosting trilateral cooperation in four committees on commerce, transport, banking and coordination. They would offer the outcome of their studies to their respective ministers.

Velayati, Turkmen Foreign Minister Discuss Railroad Link

LD2001211796 Tehran IRNA in English 2101 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Iran's Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati and Turkmen Foreign Minister Boris Shikhmuradov here Saturday [20 January] discussed the beneficial implications of a new railway linking Mashhad of Iran with Sarakhs and Tajan. The railway is to be inaugurated in April this year.

The foreign minister of Iran said the railway would also help the link between the Central Asian states and the Persian Gulf.

He said certain countries of the region were interested to transit their goods by the same railroad.

Rafsanjani Receives Turkmen, Armenian Foreign Ministers

LD2101161696 Tehran IRNA in English 1509 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — President ['Ali] Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani on Sunday voiced Iran's readiness to share its technical, industrial and economic experience with the Central Asian and Caucasian states.

In a meeting with foreign ministers of Turkmenistan, Boris Shikhmuradov and Armenia, Vahan Papazyan who have come to Tehran to attend a trilateral meeting with their Iranian counterpart, the president appreciated his Armenian and Turkmen counterpart for their determination to expand cooperation with Iran.

President Rafsanjani said in light of the huge potentials of the region, regional cooperation would boost trade exchanges, economic and political cooperation among the countries of the region.

Rafsanjani said the Islamic Republic of Iran is ready to mobilize all its technical, industrial and economic capabilities to speed up regional cooperation with the Central Asian and Caucasian nations.

Before the president, Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati briefed President Rafsanjani on the fourth tripartite meeting between Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia.

Velayati said the tripartite meeting has launched final studies to form special banking facilities to accelerate barter trade among the three states, provide special transport facilities, develop trade and commerce and carry out technical and industrial projects in the three countries.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Velayati said five committees are studying trilateral cooperation in commerce, banking, transport, energy and coordination at the attendance of respective ministers in Tehran.

The fourth tripartite meeting of Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia opened in Tehran on Saturday with the inaugural speech by the Iranian foreign minister.

Shikhmuradov and Papazyan appreciated Iranian initiative to build up tripartite cooperation as well as the strides taken in the Tehran meeting to srengthen cooperation among the three countries.

The foreign ministers of Iran, Turkmenistan and Armenia are expected to sign agreements at the end of the meeting.

Turkmen President Begins Visit; Rafsanjani Previews Talks

LD2201110896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkmen President Saparmyrat Niyazov arrived in Tehran about an hour ago and was welcomed by President [Akbar] Hashemi-Rafsanjani. A high-ranking delegation, including the ministers of foreign affairs [as heard], and deputy heads of the cabinet for transport, communications, agriculture, foreign economics, and commerce, are accompanying the Turkmen president on his visit to Tehran.

On arrival in Tehran, Mr. Niyazov spoke about the strength of the bilateral relations between Turkmenistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran. He stressed: In addition to following up previous agreements between the two countries and expediting the implementation of these agreements, we will be exchanging views with the president of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during this trip, about regional and international issues.

For his part, Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, our country's president, said the following about Mr. Niyazov's visit:

[Begin Rafsanjani recording] We will also be holding discussions about regional affairs, about issues relating to the Caspian Sea, about security in the entire region, about the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization], and about many other things — international issues. We are not imposing any limitations on our talks. One of the serious topics of discussion will be the way in which we will be exploiting the Iran-Turkmenistan railway. Soon, in the course of the next few months, you will witness the revival of the Silk Road from Iran to Turkmenistan. [end recording]

Rafsanjani, Turkmen President Discuss Expansion of Ties

LD2201200296 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1730 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The presidents of Iran and Turkmenistan this afternoon reviewed various ways of expanding the two countries' relations.

President Saparmurad Niyazov of Turkmenistanat this meeting thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for supporting Turkmenistan's policy of declaring neutrality at the United Nations. He described Iran's role in the success of the regional programs as highly significant. He also praised the steps undertaken by the Islamic Republic of Iran to complete the trans-Asian railway through implementation of the Mashhad to Sarakhs project and said: The two countries' authorities are determined politically to strengthen and expand their relations further.

President Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for his part, said that grounds are suitable for the expansion of ties in all fields. He referred to the Sarakhs-Mashhad railway project as an important international project and added: Linking the Central Asian railway lines to Iran and from Iran to Europe will play a significant role in developing the economy of all countries of the region.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed the hope for cooperation among littoral states of the Caspian Sea and stressed the need for protecting the environment and resources of this sea by respecting interests of the entire region of the Caspian Sea.

Referring to the joint cooperation between the two countries in various fields, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani said: Expansion of bilateral and multi-lateral relations with the neighboring states and other countries is essential to increase economic cooperation and to promote peace and stability in the region.

The president of Iran and Turkmenistan also stressed the need for the settlement of the crises in Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Mr. Niyazov arrived in Tehran earlier today.

Accord Reached With Turkmenistan; Niyazov Departs Tehran

LD2301114896 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Saparmurad Niyazov, the president of Turkmenistan who arrived in Tehran yesterday at the head of a senior delegation of that country's officials, left Tehran this morning after signing several

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

cooperation documents. He was seen off officially by President Hashemi-Rafsanjani.

At the end of Mr. Niyazov's visit to Tehran, it was announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran and Turkmenistan have reached final agreement on all the issues covered in their talks and a positive step has been taken toward raising the level of their cooperation.

Turkmenistan's president said at the end of his visit to our country that this is the 10th time that he has held positive and successful talks on the expansion of relations between the two countries, and that, during this trip, very valuable steps have been taken toward raising the level of relations and cooperation between them.

Mr. Niyazov said: There are no differences of opinion over any of the issues discussed by the presidents of the two countries.

The president of Turkmenistan also said that he is delighted that the Islamic Republic of Iran has agreed to secure Turkmenistan's needs, including flour and medicine. He emphasized: Laying the foundations for good and strong relations between the two countries is in the interest of the nations and countries of the region and the world.

Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, for his part, spoke about the outcome of Mr. Niyazov's visit to the Islamic Republic of Iran, saying:

[Begin Rafsanjani recording] The outcome of everything that was on the agenda was good.

We reached final agreement over oil, gas, and the joint dam over the Hari river. Also the transfer of electricity — that is, linking up our power networks and the work that Iran is doing there — construction of silos, roads, optic fiber lines, supply of water to Marv city, and other development projects, including, recently, agriculture, which will place some land and water at the disposal of Iranians.

Appropriate decisions were taken on the methods of payment and banking operational systems, insurance, and taxes that have been worked out for the projects that are to be implemented. We had already discussed these issues and this was the first time that we reached agreement on them. [end recording]

Australian Senate Speaker on Talks With Iran

LD1901184196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 19 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In an interview with a Central News Unit correspondent at the end of his five-day visit to Iran, Australian Senate Speaker Michael Beahan described his talks with Iranian officials as fruitful. He said: Relations between Tehran and Canberra are based on trade ties which have been strengthened.

Majles Speaker Nateq-Nuri also expressed his satisfaction over the positive results of talks between the Iranian and Australian parliamentary delegations. He said: Visits such as this can play a crucial role in expanding the relations between the two countries in the political, economic, and cultural dimensions. The Majles speaker added: On the basis of our talks it has been decided that the Iran-Australia joint commission will review bilateral economic and political ties in order to find better ways of expanding relations between the two countries.

In talks today between Mr. Nateq-Nuri and the Australian Senate speaker, joint investments in the Indian Ocean littoral regions and the newly independent states of the region were discussed. The two sides achieved positive results in these talks.

Rafsanjani Receives Libyan Official, Offers Assistance

LD2001121796 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President Hashemi-Rafsanjani received 'Isa 'Abd-al-Kafi al-Sayd, Libyan agrarian reform and land reclamation minister, today.

At the meeting the president, noting the vital role of water in the preservation of communities and future world political equations, stressed the need for the proper use of water resources and the prevention of the waste of this life-giving substance. Mr. Rafsanjani referred to Iran's moves to secure the equipment and technical and industrial resources for various types of irrigation. He said: Iran is ready to put at Libya's disposal its experiences and resources in that field.

The Libyan agrarian minister briefed the president on his talks with his Iranian counterpart and the results of his visit to Iran.

Rafsanjani Meets Sri Lankan Trade Minister

LD2001133196 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Kingsley Wickremarantne, the Sri Lankan trade and commerce minister was received by President ['Ali Akbar] Hashemi-Rafsanjani today.

At the meeting, the Sri Lankan minister described his visit to Iran as successful. The visit is aimed at reviewing the ways of further expanding economic-trade ties between Iran and Sri Lanka. He said: Because of

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Iran's favorable geographical position, it is considered to be a proper and economical trade link between Sri Lanka and some members of SAARC organization, Central Asian states, and the Caucasus. That is why Sri Lanka is seeking to extend the level of its trade exchanges with Iran and considered this as particularly important.

Hashemi-Rafsanjani expressed his satisfaction at Sri Lanka's efforts to extend trade cooperation with Iran and said: There is nothing to limit the expansion of relations with Sri Lanka in all areas of interest, especially in economic ties. We welcome the expansion of cooperation between the two countries.

Iran Signs Economic Agreement With Sri Lanka

LD2001162996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1530 GMT 20 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At the end of the fourth Iran-Sri Lankan joint economic session, the two countries' officials signed an economic memorandum of understanding. According to the memorandum, which was signed by Morteza Mohammad-Khan, the Iranian minister of economic affairs and finance, and the Sri Lankan commerce minister, the two countries agreed to cooperate on the exchange of rubber and tires, the tea trade, melamine and carpets, and to present them in the markets of Central and Southeast Asia.

The Islamic Republic of Iran and Sri Lanka will also make joint investments in Sri Lanka for the construction of tankers and fuel storage tanks, bridges, and goods warehouses.

Iranian Official on Dialogue With Iraqi Kurdish Factions

LD2101110596 Tehran IRNA in English 1047 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — 'Ali Aqa Mohammadi, who recently headed a delegation to northern Iraq, stressed that whenever the Iraqi Kurds face any problem, the Islamic Republic will mobilize all possible facilities to solve their problems. In an interview with the English-language daily 'TEHRAN TIMES' Sunday, Aqa Mohammadi, elaborating on his eight-day mission to the Iraqi Kurdistan, said "we had detailed dialogs with heads of the warring Iraqi parties in northern Iraq during this trip. New solutions were found to the problems existing between the two major groups involved in the conflict."

An important outcome of the trip was that the Iraqi Kurds declared their strong political determination to establish a comprehensive peace in their country, Aqa Mohammadi added. "If others, including the Americans, do not sabotage the talks, the Kurdish warring factions may reach a peace deal in the near future," he underlined.

Referring to severeness of the cold season, shortage of fuel, the high rate of unemployment and drastic shortage of food and medicine, he said that the life condition is deteriorating for the inhabitants of northern Iraq.

Commenting on Iran's humanitarian aids to Iraqi people, Aqa Mohammadi said that the Iraqi Kurds consider Iran as a saviour and reflected their gratitude towards the Iranian delegation. Summing up the outcome of his observation in his visit to the Iraqi Kurdistan, he concluded, "Iraqi Kurds want peace. It is not impossible to bring about peace there, if there is no sabotage."

Iranian Commentary Views al-Qadhdhafi-Mubarak Meeting

LD1901183196 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1530 GMT 19 Jan 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Libyan leader Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi and Egyptian President Husni Mubarak met on Thursday January 18 in a military base in Egypt. At the meeting the two sides discussed bilateral relations, the developments of Western Maghreb Union, Libya's investments, as well the situation of Egyptian workers in Libya.

Egypt and Libya are among the North African states both of which suffer from unfavorable economic conditions. Due to the sanctions slapped on Libya by the UN Security Council, it is facing a very grave economic situation. The sanctions have been imposed by the Security Council as a result of the U.S. and its Western allies over the extradition of two Libyans being suspected of having a hand in the Lockerbie incident. In the event, an American airliner was exploded over Lockerbie in Scotland. The sanctions imposed by the council have really had negative consequences on the Libyan economy. The surge in unemployment and skyrocketing inflation are of the smacks inflicted on the Libyan economy. On the one hand, by expelling foreign workers Libya tries to lessen the effects of the UN sanctions. Presently there are over 500,000 Egyptian workers in Libya. On the other hand, Egypt, which due to its weak economy is greatly dependent on the West's donations, cannot cope with the large number of workers pouring into the country. However, the occupation of Egyptian workers in Libya was a great help for the battered economy of Egypt.

Meanwhile it is estimated that the recent meeting of Libyan and Egyptian leaders has been in line with the spurring Egypt to try to push for the lifting of

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

the sanctions by the UN Security Council. However, in view of the fact that Egypt is one of th important countries which has played a key role in the progress of the Zionist-Arab peace process, al-Qadhdhafi pins great hope to Cairo's efforts in spurring the council to lessen its sanctions against Libya so that it can cope with the problems caused as a result of the imposition of the UN sanctions.

Tehran Radio on Prospects for New Turkish Government

NC2001144996 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 20 Jan 96

[Commentary by News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] Because the other parties in the Turkish parliament have resolved not to join a coalition with the Welfare Party [RP], Necmettin Erbakan's 10-day effort to establish a coalition government has failed.

Accordingly, at his meeting with President Suleyman Demirel yesterday, Erbakan said he had given up trying to form a government. The president immediately assigned the task to Tansu Ciller of the True Path Party.

In the 24 December elections, the Welfare Party gained the most seats in the parliament, with 158 seats; the True Path Party got 135; the Motherland Party won 132 seats; the Democratic Leftist Party got 76 seats; and the Republican People's Party won 49 seats, out of a total of 550 parliamentary seats.

Because 276 seats are needed to establish a unified government, parties are being forced to choose political partners in order to form a coalition government. The RP, which is known for its Islamist leanings, needed cooperation from other parties to form a cabinet, even though it won the most seats. No cooperation was forthcoming, and Erbakan was unable to form a government.

Even though factors such as foreign influence and opposition by the armed forces and investors have been mentioned, the fact is that the RP would resolve social, political, cultural, and economic problems on the basis of religious principles. It is therefore considered to be opposed to a laicist and secular regime. In other words, regardless of the RP's majority, it is considered to be the rival of all Turkish political parties in parliament due to its ideological differences.

Hence, the Turkish parties' refusal to cooperate with the RP was due not only to political but also ideological reasons. However, in contrast to the RP, the rightist factions—the Motherland and True Path parties—have no basic differences in their respective platforms. What separates them are the personal differences between Mesut Yilmaz and Tansu Ciller, their leaders.

So a coalition between the two is not unlikely and it is hoped that—as with Ciller's previous cabinet, in which the Republican People's Party participated—a coalition government composed of three parties, that is, the True Path Party, the Motherland Party, and the Republican People's Party—will be formed in Turkey.

Iranian Dailies Denounce Violence in Chechnya

LD2101093896 Tehran IRNA in English 0811 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Two English-language dailies today commented on the Chechen crisis, denouncing the widespread violence and savage massacre of innocent Muslims in that part of the world.

Commenting on four hostage-taking incidents in a month by separatist forces, 'KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL' said that it was apparent the people of Chechnya have been suffering from the violence unleashed by Russian forces stationed in the republic to suppress the drive for independence.

"Given the political developments in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and Moscow's inability to maintain its hold on this region, the Chechen conflict could set a new mark in the gradual decline of Moscow's influence in this region," it stressed.

It noted that it was clear that any illogical and premature moves on the part of Russia towards Chechnya could further aggravate the situation, causing the unrest to spread rapidly to the whole area, which, as it is, full of hostility towards Moscow.

Asking whether Russia is determined to pursue its current policy in Chechnya that will ultimately increase the possibility of a full- fledged military war and propel the region into a perilous scene of conflict, it stated, "so far, the Kremlin has turned a deaf ear to the pleas of international bodies, particularly those based in Europe, on immediate cessation of the bloody hostilities."

Another daily, 'IRAN NEWS', also commented on the recent hostage taking incidents that it said were rooted in the Chechens' despair over the seeming hopelessness of their situation.

It observed that Moscow-Ankara relations went a little sour over the hostage crisis.

Referring to the Russian way of handling the Chechen problem, it remarked, "Moscow's general approach in

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

dealing with ethnic and religious minorities in the Russian Federation has been totally unfair and one-sided."

The Russians' particular approach in the case of the Muslim Chechen people has been exceptionally brutal and devoid of logic, it said, poinitng out that the Kremlin could have easily established dialog with the Chechens and listened to their grievances before resorting to heavy guns.

The article further warned Russian leaders, "such an indiscrimination and the massive killing of Chechen Muslims will inevitably raise the ire of the rest of the Muslim world and affect their relations with the Russian Federation as a whole."

Iranian Official: Israel 'Only Source of Tension' in Middle East

LD2201214796 Tehran IRNA in English 2132 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — In an interview with TEHRAN TIMES, an English daily, 'Ali Reza Sadra, Dezful (Khuzestan) representative to the Islamic Consultative Assembly and member of the Majles foreign policy commission, stated that the Zionist regime is the only source of tension and insecurity in the strategic Mideast region.

Sadra warned the regional countries to be aware of plots and conspiracies hatched by the Zionists.

He then elaborated on the Majles foreign policy commission towards the so-called Middle East peace process, saying that the Islamic Republic of Iran basically disagrees with any form of concession given to the Zionist regime.

The Majles deputy was of the opinion that granting of such concession would not be in the interest of the regional countries, specifically the Palestinians.

Asked to comment on Israel-Syria peace talks, Sadra stated that Syria has a firm stance towards Israel, adding that Syria insisted on its demand on the establishment of peace and security in the region.

He believed that Syria would not yield to any kind of concession to Israel. He pointed out that the peace negotiation would not undermine Iran-Syria relations and that the friendly ties between the two countries would continue as it did in the past.

On a recent visit of Iranian delegation to Iraqi Kurdistan, Sadra said that Iran's mediation between the various Kurdish factions was meant to bring about peace, unity, territorial integrity and congruity in the region. He added that Iran pursued the same kind of policy in Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries.

The Dezful representative stated that the UN secretary general, Butrus Butrus-Ghali, attached great significance to Iran's pivotal role in the mediation of the disputes in the region in addition to its central role in the Persian Gulf region.

Sadra pointed out that despite the United States dissatisfaction and opposition to Iran's mediation in Iraqi Kurdistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran would spare no effort to bring about peace among the different groups in the region.

The Majles deputy then indicated that the Majles foreign commission played an active role in expanding cultural, economic and political relations with other countries, especially with the neighboring countries.

Sadra termed the forthcoming Majles elections a significant event in the history of the country. He finally concluded that active participation of the people in the next election would guarantee the fate, prosperity and success of Iran.

Iranian Commentary Views Afghan Government's Optimism About Peace

LD2201144396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1100 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Out of respect for the holy month of Ramadan, the Afghan Government declared unilateral and unconditional cease-fire across the country. According to an official statement announced on Kabul radio yesterday, President Borhanoddin Rabbani called on his opponents to agree to a cease-fire in order to end the bloodshed in the month of Ramadan.

According to political observers, this decision by the Rabbani government — which lacks the necessary legal and political guarantees for implementation — reflects Rabbani's optimism about developments in the past several weeks in Afghanistan and the region and is an effort to use a religious occasion to end political violence.

Fundamentally speaking, a unilateral cease-fire reflects confidence and self-assurance about the enemy's respect for the cease-fire or the military inability of the enemy to continue his aggression.

The optimistic announcement of a unilateral cease-fire by Rabbani indicates that there are points of optimism in the Afghan Government's analysis about the current situation in the country.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

To begin with, the calm which has settled on the Afghan war fronts allowed the government to announce a unilateral cease-fire without fearing effective aggression by belligerent groups, and it allowed the government to put on a show of strength, particularly since the calm is basically the outcome of a military balance and political agreements between the government and its opponents.

Furthermore, the unilateral cease-fire will place the opponents of the government in a difficult position because violating the Forbidden Month [of Ramadan], in the religious society of Afghanistan, will probably damage the popularity of those who oppose the suggestion.

Furthermore, some moderate social and political trends and organizations have strengthened their positions in the past few months in Afghanistan and they have tried to moderate the position of the radical groups. These developments made the Rabbani government optimistic about strengthening the policy of political coordination.

Rabbani is now trying to use the holy month of Ramadan as a firm religious institution acceptable to all Afghan groups to overcome ethnic and language differences.

Iranian Majles Deputy: No Problems With Foreign Debt Repayment

LD2201184796 Tehran IRNA in English 1805 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan 22, IRNA — In an exclusive interview with TEHRAN TIMES, an English daily, Hojjat ol-Eslam Qorbanali Dorri Najaf-Ababi, a member of the Majles special budget commission, stated that the Islamic Republic of Iran is facing no problems in the repayment of its foreign debt in the next fiscal year.

The hojjatollah added that the repayment of the foreign debt will be within the framework of the second-five year development plan being a major element of fiscal budget.

Najaf-Abadi indicated that the Central Bank of Iran will be in charge of regulating the circulation of the national currency in addition to transactions made in hard currencies at local and international levels as predicted in the next year's budget. The member of Islamic consultative assembly pointed out that all private companies and organizations engaged in financial activities are urged to open credit accounts and chanalize their assets through the Central Bank of Iran.

The Majles deputy said that Iran's foreign currency income is expected to hit a new mark of %20 billion, %16 billion [percentage signs as received] of which, is earmarked for foreign purchases of the government and private sectors.

He added that these expenditure are primariy based on the purchase of raw materials, spare parts and the other needs of the industries.

Najaf-Abadi stressed that the Majles has given top priority to basic capital investments on steel industries, petrochemical plants, energy and water projects.

The deputy stated that in the 1375 (March 1996-97) fiscal budget, one hundred million dollars hase been allocated for the completion of the Imam Khomeyni International Airport project, considered a stategic project, besides the constructions of other airports around the country.

The Hojjat ol-Eslam also indicated the possibility of foreign investments in the infrasructure projects in collaboration with local firms. He pointed out that such investments has to be directed towards gas and oil exploration projects in southern Fars Province, Souleyman, Balal and Siri oil and gas fields.

He went on to say the investment will also include the completion of Asalouye refinery, the construction of liquid gas and gas refinery installations, fish powder factories, combination cycle power plants, Karoun-3 and Karoun-4 dams, setting up of a factory for the manufacture of diesel engines, ship building industry, extension of railroad grid, sugar factories and industry for the production of heavy machunery.

Deputies' Letter Assails 'Insulting' Statement by Officials

LD2201130396 Tehran IRNA in English 1231 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 22, IRNA — Some 150 Majles deputies signed a letter here Monday criticizing a statement released by certain government officials who had brought the Majles under fire for lack of coordination with the government.

The letter, read out at the open session of Majles, described the statement as insulting and demanded that those writing the statement apologize to the Majles. The letter read, "While cooperating with the government, appreciating its valuable works and respecting its head, Majles preserves its supervisory role efficiently."

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Tehran Predicts 'Impartial,' 'Healthy' Elections

NC2301094896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0445 GMT 23 Jan 96

[Commentary by the News Research and Commentary Group]

[FBIS Translated Text] With only a few weeks remaining until the fifth round of elections to the Islamic Majles, the officials in charge of holding the elections are already making the preliminary arrangements. The need for all caring persons' cooperation regarding the country's destiny and their assistance in the holding of healthy elections is felt on the eve of the elections.

The speech last week by the great leader of the Islamic Revolution, who highlighted the importance of the elections and the need for the holding of impartial and healthy elections, was both serious and reassuring. He asked all prominent persons, clerics, and the intelligentsia to explain and elaborate on the importance of elections to the various sectors of the population.

Obviously, the nature of the elections is influenced by the expression of various beliefs and viewpoints by different social figures. All the factions and nominees will present programs based on their knowledge and experience for the building and growth of society. Having a general positive approach toward people's views and beliefs and unanimity among thinkers in order to attain better growth and development and national cooperation would result in better recognition of policies and constructive plans.

The special characteristics that were constantly stressed by the late imam (may God be pleased with him) and are now being endorsed by the great leader are for all factions, nominated candidates, and enlightened members of society, to abide by a code of political ethics. This will facilitate the holding of healthy and effective elections.

Although the official registration of prospective candidates has not begun, all the interested factions are ready to begin their election campaign with firmness and cohesion. All in all, it is expected that during the elections and the phases preceding and following it, efforts will be made—in keeping with political ethics—to refrain from unwarranted propaganda, which does not help in any way to raise the level of political and social expertise in society. In this manner, the fifth round of Islamic Majles elections will be concluded successfully as a realistic and responsible statement by our society.

Such a favorable holding of elections will reaffirm the political acumen and national cohesion of our Islamic society.

RESALAT Editorial Analyzes Political Parties in Iran

NC2001143596 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 14 Jan 96 pp 1, 2

[Editorial by Mohammad Kazem Anbarlu'i: "Some Talk About Factions"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Nowadays, there is much discussion about formation of political parties and groups. The intelligentsia is touting the merits of political groups and their role in the structure of the government and popular political participation. As a matter of fact, their remarks are quite appropriate and pertinent.

However, these discussions are such that even those who waxed eloquent about the shortcomings of political groups and parties at the outset of the revolution are today in the forefront in advocating the need for political parties and groups. In this article, we address those who do not view factions as a vehicle for electioneering propaganda, who consider politics as a business, who were never part of the establishment, and do not understand the concept of factions.

Our audience is those who are in the true sense seeking the correct path for service to our Islamic society by political development. Some find their mission today in lobbying for "pluralism" [preceding word in quotes in English] as the most desirable form of political participation. We do not wish to make hasty judgments in this regard, we only wish to state that these individuals should be able to interpret their theses [preceding word in English] in a way that conforms to our political culture as an independent country that has been liberated from the clutches of the powers of world arrogance and given us the culture of the Koran, the purest culture, unanimously accepted by the vast majority of our people.

Pluralism does not mean that everyone should share in the government's "smorgasbord" even if they do not subscribe to the concept of a government that serves the will of the majority! Those who propagate secularism and a secular government should not be permitted to demand a share or make false claims to "participation" in a system which has evolved according to divine criteria. In a secular government a principled approach to religious tenets would never be permitted to exist nor would the promotion of such an approach.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Hence we should ask this key question: In truth, what is the model for political participation in our society and what thoughts, beliefs, and viewpoints does it embrace?

The issue is political participation, not "political hostilities!" Those who want to introduce those elements—those who do not believe in our divine system—into the realm of political participation are committing a serious mistake. They would only be fanning hostilities and grudges.

It has been said that in our society there are no organizations of experts independent of the government! Or that "one of the problems of our society is the lack of civic and independent institutions." [footnote: IRAN newspaper 21 December 1995]

Is it a fact that in our society civic and independent institutions do not exist? What is meant by "independent?" Does it imply those who are "opposed" to the government and the system?

There is no doubt that there are all kinds of people in this country today. Some people think that they do not exist, because their presence is rather lackluster. This kind of performance is due to their inability to forge any ties to the masses on the one hand and on the other hand is evidence of the ability and sagacity of the leaders of the revolution, the political institutions, groups and factions supporting the system, who have been able to elicit the trust of the masses with their sincerity.

We will continue this discussion later.

Jannati on Need To Fully Celebrate Revolution Anniversary

LD2101135796 Tehran IRNA in English 1327 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Jan. 21, IRNA — Representative of the leader and the secretary of the Islamic Propagation Coordinating Council Ayatollah Ahmad Jannati on Sunday emphasized the need for fully celebrating the anniversary of the victory of the Islamic revolution.

In a meeting with the officials of the headquarters in charge of holding the celebrations, Ayatollah Jannati said the ten-day dawn period (February 1-11) is the occasion for people to declare their allegiance to leader of the Islamic revolution Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i and to the revolution's objectives.

Ayatollah Jannati called on people to actively attend the ten-day dawn celebrations and said the world should know that the Iranian people are as usual loyal to the leader of the Islamic revolution and to the Islamic system. The enemies would not live enough to see their long cherished desire to harm the Islamic revolution materialized, the ayatollah said.

Referring to the forthcoming fifth parliamentary elections, Ayatollah Jannati said the respective officials should prepare the ground for active participation of people in the polls.

Pakistan

Islamabad Wants 'Categorical' Assurances From India on Nuclear Tests

AU2301104496 Paris AFP in English 1019 GMT 23 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Geneva, Jan 23 (AFP) — Pakistan said Tuesday [23 January] that it expected "categorical assurances" that India will not carry out another nuclear test, warning failure to provide the guarantees would jeopardize conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in the near future.

Pakistani Ambassador Munir Akram also told a UN conference on disarmament here that his country would take "appropriate measures" if nuclear-capable missiles were deployed along its borders.

Pakistani Minister Comments on Purchase of 40 Mirages From France

BK2201151196 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1400 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Brushing aside speculations carried by a section of press, federal minister for information and broadcasting, Mr. Khalid Ahmad Khan Kharal, said that Pakistan is conducting negotiations with France for the purchase of 40 pieces of Mirage-2000 aircraft. When the minister's attention was drawn to a news report regarding the attitude of French Government toward this proposed deal, he said so far the Government of France has conveyed to Islamabad that it was in the process of examining Pakistan's request for the purchase of Mirage-2000 and nothing has been finalized.

Pakistani General Says Kashmir Requires 'High State of Preparedness'

BK2201091796 Islamabad THE NATION in English 22 Jan 96 p 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] RALWALPINDI — General Jehangir Karamat, Chief of the Army Staff, visited the troops located in the forward areas of Azad Kashmir, says an ISPR [Interservice Public Relations] Press release issued here on Sunday [21 January].

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Accompanied by Corps Commander Lieutenant General Ali Kuli Khan, the Chief of the Army Staff met the troops at various places and saw them busy in their routine professional pursuits.

He appreciated the high morale of the troops and praised their stamina and sustenance in the present chilly weather.

Talking informally to the troops, General Jehangir Karamat said that the nation held them in high esteem as they were braving the vagaries of nature at the peril of their lives to provide a formidable defence to the sacred frontiers of the motherland.

The Chief of Army Staff exhorted the troops to devote themselves fully towards enhancing their professional capabilities as this was their primary duty towards the national defence.

He cautioned the troops to remain fully vigilant in view of the deteriorating situation in Held Kashmir. "Such a situation demands a high state of preparedness to face any eventually" he added.

MQM Observes 'Partial Protest Strike' in Karachi

BK2101145396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A partial protest strike was observed in Karachi today by MQM [Muhajir Qaumi Movement] Altaf group. Most shopping centers, markets, and business centers were closed. However, small shops, particularly those dealing with eatables, were open. Public transport was plying on the roads, but their number was thin. However, private transport, including cars and motorcycles, were plying in a sizable number. The buses of Karachi Transport Corporation were plying normally. Karachi Port Trust also functioned normally. Partial strike was also observed in Hyderabad.

Pakistani Minister Urges Nawaz Sharif To Help End Strikes

BK2101141596 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The federal minister for law, justice, and parliamentary affairs, Professor N.D. Khan, has appealed to patriotic forces to persuade Altaf Group for the resumption of talks as dialogue is the only solution for issues in a democratic country. Addressing a news conference in Islamabad today, he said Pakistan is witnessing re-emergence as an attractive country for foreign investors. So, peace has assumed manifold importance at this juncture. He said the leader of the opposition, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, should also contribute positively in ending repeated strikes and law and order situation to serve the larger national interest. [sentence as heard] He said if the agreement between Nawaz Sharif and Altaf Hussain aims at destabilizing the elected government, it will not succeed, rather this attempt will benefit the enemies of the country only.

Pakistani Opposition Leader Criticizes Karachi Situation

BK2101134596 Hong Kong AFP in English 1221 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Karachi, Jan 21 (AFP) — Pakistani opposition leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif on Sunday [21 January] criticized the government of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in alleged "extrajudicial" killings in Karachi.

"Any independent inquiry will reveal that this is daylight murder. Everyone is concerned," he said in a telephone interview with AFP from Lahore.

He was commenting on a charge levelled by the ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement (MQM) in the Senate that thirteen of its activists had been gunned down in cold blood in one week after being arrested by the police.

"Everyone can see that these are fake encounters," Sharif said. "These men were arrested and then killed." The term "encounter" is used here to describe armed confrontations between militants and security personnel.

"These extrajudicial killings have the backing of the prime minister and her entire government," Sharif said. "I would call this the worst kind of brutality."

The police deny the charge and say the MQM activists were killed during armed confrontations with security personnel.

Sharif said the Pakistan Muslim League, the main opposition party which he heads, would take up the matter for debate in the next session of the National Assembly in Islamabad this week.

The government is following a "unconstitutional and unlawful approach" in Karachi, the opposition leader said.

Large sections of Karachi remained paralysed Sunday as the MQM called the second strike this month to protest against the killing of its workers.

At least 83 people have been killed here this month in political violence. Nearly 1,800 people died last year.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Police Nab 9 'Terrorists' in Karachi; 9 Killed in Hasilpur

BK2301004096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In Karachi, Crime Investigation Agency police have arrested nine notorious terrorists from New Karachi, Orangi Town, Buffer Zone, and Jet Lines localities. During interrogation, these terrorists have admitted of their involvement in various crimes in the area.

According to Associated Press of Pakistan, nine persons, including three policemen, were killed and four injured in a surprise attack made by armed men near Hasilpur today. When the police was taking six prisoners to a special court for hearing, they were attacked by a rival party. It is reported that this incident took place as a result of a vendetta.

AJK Official on 'Contradictions' in Pakistan's Kashmir Policy

BK2001133096 Islamabad THE NATION in English 20 Jan 96 pp 1,5

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lahore — The AJK [Azad Jammu and Kashmir] Prime Minister Sardar Abdul Qayyum has expressed ignorance about Pakistan's Kashmir policy while saying that if there is any it is fraught with contradictions.

Speaking at THE NATION Forum the AJK Prime Minister termed the Government's intention of granting India the status of Most Favoured Nation (MFN) for trade as one of the contradictions. Harbouring this intention the government of Pakistan should be ashamed of mentioning even Kashmir, he said.

He maintained that Government of Pakistan is lagging far behind from where it should have been vis-a-vis Kashmir as far as the struggle of Kashmiris and Indian oppression in the Valley is concerned.

He said despite political differences with General Ziaul Haq 'one has to admit that General Zia cannot be separated from present struggle in Kashmir.' Fact of the matter is that had Ziaul Haq not been there the movement in Kashmir would have not been launched at all, he observed.

Referring to former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in the context of Kashmir issue, he said that Nawaz had an advantage as being a Kashmiri himself as in India Nehru was. On the other hand Benazir Bhutto has the advantage of being a woman whose views are given importance by the West. 'I have asked Benazir to cash in on her charismatic personality vis-a-vis Kashmir issue,' he disclosed.

He said though we are yet to fully expose Indian atrocities on Kashmiris to the West, the efforts made by Pakistani and Kashmiri immigrants in this respect are worth-praising. However, on the other hand India camouflages its excesses by describing the movement as 'fundamentalist' and 'separatist.' India also takes advantage of being the largest democracy and a secular state.

Replying to a question, he said that though the West is against Indian oppression in Kashmir and favours Kashmiris' right to self- determination, at the same time, it does not want Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. The American Government expresses grave concern over the violation of human rights in Kashmir, takes the issues as its responsibility, apprehends an Indo-Pakistan nuclear war, if the issue is not resolved but it does not have a clear concept about the resolution of the issue.

Referring to 'third option', 'division of Kashmir', 'trusteeship status to Kashmir', 'joint control of India and Pakistan on Kashmir' and 'permanent status to Line of Control', Sardar Qayyum said whatever the solution of Kashmir issue, there is a need to end the oppression. The solution should, however, be political and not military, he observed. That is why they have proposed many times that the leadership of Held and Azad Kashmir should be given a chance to meet and thrash out the issue.

Sardar Abdul Qayyum said that the threat of nuclear war is the one which could be exploited most for the resolution of the dispute as caretaker Prime Minister Mocen Qureshi was taken very seriously around the world when he said that Pakistan's nuclear programme and Kashmir issue are interlinked.

Replying to yet another question about Pakistan's Foreign Service's performance regarding Kashmir issue, he said the officials of the Foreign Service and Army should be banned from joining world organisations and political parties so that they could serve the country selflessly.

About his political career, he said that he has undergone accountability four times including his arrest thrice. The property I had in 1947 was more than what I own now.

About his son Sardar Attique's interference in the government affairs, he said apart from being my son he is an MLA [Member of Legislative Council] also and his electoral ticket was supported by AJK President Sardar Sikandar Hayat more than myself. "I am not that weak and incompetent to be dictated by my son," he said.

He denied having any conflict with Sardar Sikandar Hayat. 'I still have confidence in him. He himself was a

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

Prime Minister. However, he might have had a genuine complaint about my performance as the Prime Minister,' Sardar Abdul Qayyum said.

Pakistan: ANP Chief Urges End to External Interference in Afghanistan

BK2101110796 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 21 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by Syed Bukhar Shah]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] PESHAWAR — ANP [Awami National Party] leader Khan Abdul Wali Khan Saturday [20 January] called for an end to foreign interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, which was a prerequisite for restoration of peace there.

The recent statement of Hezb-Islami Chief Golbaddin Hekmatyar had endorsed the ANP's contention that Pakistan was interfering in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, claimed Wali Khan while talking to newsmen at a lunch hosted by Haji Gholam Ahmed Bilour at his residence in his (Wali) honour. Hekmatyar in his statement during a press conference on Thursday alledged that Pakistan at the time of Najibullah's fall tried to prevent a Pukhtoon leader from taking power in Kabul.

The ANP leader continued that the same complaints had been lodged by President Borhanoddin Rabbani. His party, he said, had always opposed foreign interference in the affairs of Kabul. He said that the Afghan issue could be solved only by the Afghan themselves.

Wali Khan disclosed that Hekmatyar had sent him a message that he was being prevented from taking power only because he (Hekmatyar) was a Pukhtoon.

"But I have told him that the revolution in Afghanistan has not been brought in the name of Pukhtoon Wali, but in the name of Islam", he said. He argued that Hekmatyar became Pukhtoon now when he was not given his share.

The ANP leader maintained that President Farooq Ahmed Khan Leghari and President of Afghanistan Borhanoddin Rabbani had also requested him to play a mediator role in Afghanistan but "I have told them that the mullahs would never accept the decisions of jirgas. "Mullahs have always issued fatwas. I ask all those who wanted the enforcement of Islamic system in Afghanistan as to whether the present system in Kabul was Islamic one", Wali Khan said.

"I have asked this question from the late General Ziaul Haq and I am asking the same question from Maulana Fazlur Rehman and Qazi Hussain Ahmed", he added.

Commenting on the present situation, the veteran politician said that the present government had failed to solve the people's problems and now they were left with no option, but to come out on roads to get solve their problems.

In democratic form of government, he said the governments were being changed through parliaments but here the situation was totally different. All the democratic institutions including parliament and judiciary had been made corrupt, he said adding that nation would adopt illegal and unconstitutional means when the government had blocked all the democratic ways.

The law and order situation, Wali Khan went on saying could be judged from the fact that the terrorists were roaming openly but the governments was blaming India and Afghanistan for terrorists activities.

Afghan Brigadier Reveals Pakistan Plane Hijack Plot

BK2301085496 Peshawar THE FRONTIER POST in English 23 Jan 96 p 12

[Report by Imtiaz Hussain]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Peshawar — A brigadier in the Afghan army who was arrested by the Crime Investigation Department (CID) a few days back from Hayatabad, disclosed a plan of hijacking of an aircraft from Pakistan, The Frontier Post learnt reliably.

Mir Akbar Ansari, trained by KGB, revealed that the Afghan government was willing to pay Rs. [rupees] 10 million for the purpose, sources informed saying that Ansari came to Pakistan some two years back and had made close contacts with the local bureaucracy and some heads of criminal gangs.

He had developed close contacts with one Barkat Shah of Achar Kale on the Kohat road through whom he wanted to materialise the hijacking plan. Barkat Shah, who was running a narcotics den in his village, was arrested by the same CID after his name was disclosed by the brigadier.

During the interrogation, the brigadier disclosed that he had made the plan to assassinate General 'Abdol Hakim Katawaze which was executed by one Fareed, who was presently serving in the Afghan army as captain. He confessed that he was paid Sone lakh for this purpose. Fareed also used to reside with Barkat Shah at his hideout at Achar Kale.

The sources disclosed that Barkat Shah the close aide of Brigadier Ansari was also involved in dacoities at the Afghan prostitution dens in Peshawar. For this purpose, he had hired one Wahid an Afghan national. Wahid was

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

supposed to make relations with the prostitutes and later they looted the same den. They used one white Toyota Corolla during the operation, the sources informed.

A source in the police informed that Ansari and Shah made a deal allegedly with the Afghan government for the assassination of some high-ranking government officials and some politicians for which they were promised handsome amount.

Sri Lanka

Colombo Officials Suspect LTTE of Downing Air Force Helicopter

BK2201133896 Hong Kong AFP in English 1320 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] COLOMBO, Jan 22 (AFP) — Tamil Tiger guerrillas are suspected of shooting down an air force helicopter over northern Sri Lanka Monday [22 January] together with 39 security personnel onboard, official sources said. [passage omitted]

Defence sources said that the little evidence so far suggested that the aircraft may have been shot down by a rebel anti-aircraft gunner firing from a boat off the eastern coast of the Jaffna peninsula.

However, there was no word from the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) about the crash.

The LTTE is known to have fired medium machine guns to bring down a Chinese built Y-8 cargo plane off Jaffna in November last year, killing five crew members.

Hopes faded for the 39 people on board the Mi-17 helicopter as rescue aircraft and gunboats failed to locate the wreckage five hours after launching their search in high seas patrolled by the Tiger naval unit, the Sea Tigers.

The LTTE has fired surface-to-air heat-seeking anti-aircraft missiles to bring down several air force transport planes and at least one ground attack aircraft last year.

A total of six air force planes were lost in 1995. Defence sources said at least five of them crashed due to enemy action. [passage omitted]

LTTE 'Rebels' Claim Responsibility for Downed Sri Lankan Helicopter

BK2201144096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1410 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] COLOMBO, Jan 22 (AFP) — The Tamil Tiger guerrillas Monday claimed in intercepted radio communications that they downed an air force helicopter over northern Sri Lanka together with 39 security personnel onboard, official sources here said.

Security forces monitoring internal VHF radio communications of the rebel Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) said the rebels reported the shooting down of the air force Mi-17 transport helicopter over the Indian Ocean, the sources said.

"The Tigers have said in (the northern peninsula of) Jaffna that they shot down the helicopter," a defence source said, but added that they also made a similar claim two days ago when nothing was hit.

There was no official word from the LTTE about the crash.

The defence ministry here issued a brief statement saying that the aircraft had disappeared and said a search was underway. The ministry gave no details.

Defence sources said the Russian-built Mi-17 was taking troopers from the main air force base at Palaly on the northern edge of the Jaffna peninsula to a smaller military base at Vettilaikerni when it went down. [passage omitted]

The little evidence so far suggested that the aircraft may have been shot down by a rebel anti-aircraft gunner firing from a boat off the eastern coast of the Jaffna peninsula, the sources said. [passage omitted]

Economic Cooperation Agreements Between Sri Lanka, Iran Reported

BK2301070396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 23 Jan 96

[Unattributed report—received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IRAN will import Sri Lanka tea in bulk to be packed and re-exported to Commonwealth Independent States (CIS countries). Iran, has also agreed to increase the share of rubber purchase and also increase an allocation of foreign exchange for import of spices from Sri Lanka.

These are some of the positive agreements reached at the fourth session of Sri Lanka Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation which has just concluded in Tehran. The Sri Lanka delegation at these discussions was led by Trade, Commerce and Food Minister Kingsley Wickremaratne.

An official spokesman said this was the outcome of Minister Wickremaratne's negotiations with the Iranian authorities. "The agreement reached to import Sri Lanka tea to be re-exported to CIS countries was a proposal by Minister Wickremaratne", the sources said.

Iran will also provide about Rs. [rupees] 3,858 million (US$ 72.8 million) as economic assistance to implement

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

several other projects, according to an official release (the projects are indicated below).

The release said:

A team of Iranian experts will visit Sri Lanka shortly to assist the country in upgrading the capacities of rice mills. Iranian technology in this sector is capable of enhancing rice milling capacity up to 20 M/T per day.

According to Minister Wickremaratne, Iranian authorities have positively responded to a proposal made by him for setting up of joint ventures in the manufacture of chandeliers, machine made carpets and melamineware.

Located in Sri Lanka, these joint ventures will look to the future markets in the entire SAARC [South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation] region.

The Iranian government has also agreed in principle to undertake the execution of several projects namely—

Road network improvement projects; upcountry rural road development programs; General hospitals; Colombo rehabilitation projects (phase III); Construction of a flyover at Dehiwela roundabout on Colombo Galle Road; Construction of a flyover across railway crossing, Kelaniya on Colombo Kandy Road.

Approximately Rs. 3,858 million will come in as economic assistance to Sri Lanka from Iran for the implementation of those projects.

Assistance also will be forthcoming from Iran for the redevelopment of barren lands in Sri Lanka affected by salinity, the release said.

Minister Wickremaratne will meet President Hashemi-Rafsanjani prior to his departure from Iran, the release said.

Four Tamil Parties React to Colombo Political Proposals

BK2101134996 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tamil political parties have reiterated their commitment to a peaceful resolution of the ethnic problem. In a joint news release, the TELO [Tamil Eelam Liberation Organization], EPRLF [Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front], PLOTE [People's Liberation Organization of Tamil Eelam], and EROS [Eelam Revolutionary Organization of Students] parties pledged that they would approach the government's political proposals in a positive manner.

However, they expressed disappointment at certain aspects of the legal draft of the new constitution unveiled this week. The news release said that the draft had failed to address the fundamental question of a unified north and east. It also expressed concern that the powers to be devolved to regional councils were too limited as against those retained by the Central Government. All four parties stressed that they were not opposed to any constitutional mechanism to protect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country, but they warned that the provisions in the draft constitution could open the way for the Central Government to interfere with the regional administration.

The news release called for the constitutional protection afforded to Buddhism to be extended to Hinduism, Christianity, and Islam as well to ensure genuine religious harmony. It also called for a national policy to remedy the injustices of what it described as the systematic colonization of the traditional territory of the Tamil people. The four parties said that they would place their proposals before the Parliamentary Select Committee. The release concluded by expressing an unshakable commitment to a political solution to the ethnic problem.

President Cites Success of Sri Lankan Policies

BK2301013696 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 22 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Chandrika Kumaratunga says that the success of the government's policies is being felt in every sphere of society. The president was speaking at a ceremony at Mittabua near Colombo yesterday. She pointed out that during a short period of time her administration has succeeded in achieving a significant degree of political, economic, and social progress. Eliminating an atmosphere of intimidation and creating a society in which every individual could live without fear, is one of its major triumph. The president observed that bribery and corruption, which were the order of the day a few years ago, have now been completely eradicated. Any person, no matter how important, could be dealt with severely if he or she is found guilty of corruption. Mrs. Kumaratunga appealed to the public to report any instances of such irregularities immediately.

President Kumaratunga also stressed that the problem of unemployment could only be resolved through economic growth and investment. The government is therefore encouraging the private sector to participate in the job creation strategy. Foreign investors are now flocking to Sri Lanka. Over 300 million rupees worth of investment agreement were signed with the BOI [Board of Investment] last year alone. Major international conglomerates, which had hitherto avoided Sri Lanka, are now taking advantage of the government's incentives

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

for foreign entrepreneurs. The president said that her administration plans to make Sri Lanka one of Asia's success stories.

She pointed out, however, that the government's opponents had launched a campaign of false rumors and misinformation to prevent it from achieving its objectives. The people, however, should not fall prey to these ploys. Certain elements of the opposition were using newspapers and the media to criticize the government's every move. However, Mrs. Kumaratunga pointed out that they are yet to suggest alternative policies or programs.

LTTE's Media Propagandist Denied Visa for Canada

BK2201045996 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 22 Jan 96

[Unatributted report — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam's [LTTE] media propagandist Vasantha Raja who is vying to become the international spokesman for the Tigers, has reportedly been refused entry into Canada, said a Lankapuvath report on Sunday.

Official sources said that according to latest intelligence reports, Vasantha Raja who was recently refused entry into India by the Indian Government when he arrived to attend a conference in Madras to discuss the setting up of a separate state for Tamils, had his application for a visa to visit Canada, a hotbed of LTTE activity, rejected by the Canadian Government.

The London-based Vasantha Raja who earlier worked for the BBC and also served as a LTTE mole in Colombo for a short while before he was discovered, is trying to oust the Paris-based international spokesman for the Tigers, Lawrence Thilagar of whom not much is heard of these days.

The sources also said Vasantha Raja was now trying to obtain a visa to visit Australia to drum up support from the LTTE supporters in that country.

LTTE Groups in 'Computer Fraud Business' To Fund 'Terrorism'

BK2201044496 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 22 Jan 96

[Report by Reggie Fernando — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An investigation by an inquiry team of computer experts hired by local authorities has discovered that Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) support groups here steal over a million pounds sterling (Rs. [rupees] 80 million) every year from the Department of Social Security in Britain through computer fraud. The figure mentioned is a part of the one billion pounds sterling of total computer-related losses in the department annually.

The report states that with the ceasefire in Northern Ireland still holding, Irish terrorist organisations have scaled down their attempts at computer fraud, only to be replaced by Tamil groups.

One leading fraud investigator said: "Tamil groups are now a significant problem and every tax-payer has become an unwilling contributor to terrorist funds."

Scotland Yard's anti-terrorist squad, SO11 has been on this trail long before the private investigating team came up with the LTTE involvement. A Scotland Yard officer said: "This is a very sensitive area. It's very current and obviously something we're looking at."

Meanwhile a top private fraud investigator confirmed to the DAILY NEWS that Tamil Tigers have recently entered the computer fraud "business".

It will be recalled that two weeks ago Sri Lanka's Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar discussed with his counterpart the British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind on the necessity to halt the funding of the LTTE by Tamil front groups here.

The report also states that these swindlers have been quick to spot the loopholes in the Department of Social Security and have sliced their way through the department's computer systems.

Sri Lankan Troops Destroy Large 'Terrorist Camp' in Toppigala Jungle

BK2101124496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 21 Jan 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Troops of Operation Rivikirana [Sun Rays] in a fresh offensive have destroyed a large terrorist camp in the Toppigala jungle off the Batticaloa District. This camp was the operational base of the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] military wing leader, Karuna. The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that the LTTE suffered heavy casualties and fled deeper into the jungle. Fifteen terrorists were killed and 20 injured in the confrontation. Operation Rivikirana was launched to destroy the terrorist positions in Toppigala. STF [Special Task Force] troops are assisting the Army in the operation. Troops are also supported by the Sri Lanka Air Force. They reached the Taranikkulam area on Friday and were engaged by a group of LTTE terrorists with small arms and mortars. The security forces retaliated effectively. Twelve

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

soldiers were injured in the confrontation. Troops also came across a large terrorist camp with a communication center, a hospital complex, vehicles, television receivers, and radio equipment. This camp was surrounded by a number of smaller installations and observation posts. The entire complex was completely destroyed by the security forces.

Fifteen Tigers Killed in Dawn Raid on Sri Lankan Village

BK2301061896 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English 23 Jan 96

[Unattributed report—received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] SECURITY forces yesterday repulsed a dawn attack by Tigers on a Sinhala village near Weli-Oya, killing 15 Tigers.

Our staffers W. G. Gunaratne and Asoka Senaratne in Anuradhapura said over 100 LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] rebels attacked the village, killing seven people including two women and wounding several others.

Three soldiers and two home guards were killed in action. The injured, a soldier, two home guards and some civilians were rushed to Anuradhapura Base hospital. A search and clear operation is in progress in the area.

Rebels who descended on the village about 1 am, had first engaged the home guards in bunkers with bombs and small arms fire. Home guards and troops retaliated and fierce fighting had continued for about half an hour, Police had told our staffers.

Tigers had attacked several villagers and torched four houses before beating a hasty retreat.

Private J. H. M. Jayatillake, a casualty admitted to Anuradhapura hospital told the "Daily News" that home guards had fired the first shots at the raiders who had obviously planned to take the village by surprise for another gruesome massacre. He had said: "We gave them a good fight using mortars, rifles and shot guns."

Meanwhile, Police and army engaged in a joint search operation at Anbuvelipuram in Trincomalee killed a leading member of the LTTE's pistol gang identified as Romesh on Sunday evening, our Trincomalee district correspondent said.

According to Police sources, a four-member gang lying in ambush had lobbed a grenade at the advancing Police-army search party at Anbuvelipuram and fled. Troops and Police pursued and caught one of them. One of the remaining three hid himself inside a toilet and when a Policeman from the search party force-opened the toilet had shot at him. Policeman Somasiri had succumbed to injuries later.

However, the search party shot and killed this rebel and later arrested the remaining two.

Meanwhile, rebels also seized a motor bike belonging to a Roman Catholic priest at Eravur, reports said.

They had also removed 25 sleepers from the rail track between Kalkudah and Devapuram in Batticaloa.

This report may contain copyrighted material. Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 352
MERRIFIELD, VA.

This is a U.S. Government publication produced by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS). Its contents in no way represent the policies, views, or attitudes of the U.S. Government.

FBIS collects, translates, disseminates, and analyzes foreign open-source information on behalf of the U.S. Government. Its publications may contain copyrighted material. ***Copying and dissemination is prohibited without permission of the copyright owners.***

— Bracketed indicators before the first sentence of each item describe the way in which the material was processed by FBIS.

— Headlines and all bracketed explanatory notes are supplied by FBIS.

— Personal and place names are rendered in accordance with the decisions of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names as adapted by FBIS. Unverified names in radio and television material appear in parentheses and are spelled phonetically; words and phrases in parentheses preceded by a question mark are unclear in the original and deduced from context.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

U.S. Government Customers

For a list of FBIS products, to subscribe to an FBIS publication, or to indicate a change of address contact:

FBIS
P.O. Box 2604
Washington, DC 20013-2604
Telephone: (202) 338-6735
FAX: (703) 733-6042

Non-Government Customers

Subscriptions are available from the National Technical Information Service:

NTIS
5285 Port Royal Road
Springfield, VA 22161
Telephone: (703) 487-4630
FAX: (703) 321-8547

New subscribers should expect a 30-day delay in receipt of the first issue.